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"Perhaps you are the man yourself?" she added insolently.

THE NOVELS, STORIES,
SKETCHES AND POEMS OF
THOMAS NELSON PAGE

JOHN MARVEL
ASSISTANT

II

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XXIII

MRS. ARGAND

I NOW began to plan how I was to meet my young lady on neutral and equal ground, for meet her I must. When I first met her I could have boldly introduced myself, for all my smutted face; now Love made me modest. When I met her, I scarcely dared to look into her eyes; I began to think of the letters of introduction I had, which I had thrown into my trunk. One of them was to Mrs. Argand, a lady whom I assumed to be the same lofty person I had seen mentioned in the papers as one of the leaders among the fashionable set, and also as one of the leaders in all public charitable work. It had, indeed, occurred to me to associate her vaguely, first with the private-car episode, and then with my poor client's landlord, the Argand Estate; but the "Argand Estate" appeared a wholly impersonal machine of steel; her reputation in the newspapers for charity disposed of this idea. In-

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deed, Wolffert had said that there were many Mrs. Argands in the city, and there were many Argands in the directory.

I presented my letter and was invited to call on a certain day, some two weeks later. She lived in great style, in a ponderous mansion of unhewn stone piled up with prison-like massiveness, surrounded by extensive grounds, filled with carefully tended, formal flower-beds. A ponderous servant asked my name and, with eyes on vacancy, announced me loudly as "Mr. Glave." The hostess was well surrounded by callers. I recognized her the instant I entered as the large lady of the private-car. Both she and her jewels were the same. Also I knew instantly that she was the "Argand Estate," which I had scored so, and I was grateful to the servant for miscalling my name. Her sumptuous drawing-rooms were sprinkled with a handsomely dressed company who sailed in, smiled around, sat on the edge of chairs, chattered for some moments, grew pensive, uttered a few sentences, spread their wings, and sailed out with monotonous regularity and the solemn air of a duty performed. There was no conversation with the hostess—only, as I observed from my coign of vantage, an exchange of compliments and flattery.

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Most of the callers appeared either to be very intimate or not to know each other at all, and when they could not gain the ear of the hostess, they simply sat stiffly in their chairs and looked straight before them, or walked around and inspected the splendid bric-à-brac with something of an air of appraisement.

I became so interested that, being unobserved myself, I stayed some time observing them. I also had a vague hope that possibly Miss Leigh might appear. It was owing to my long visit that I was finally honored with my hostess's attention. As she had taken no notice of me on my first entrance beyond a formal bow and an indifferent hand-shake, I had moved on and a moment later had gotten into conversation with a young girl—large, plump, and apparently, like myself, ready to talk to any one who came near, as she promptly opened a conversation with me, a step which, I may say, I was more than ready to take advantage of. I recognized her as the girl who had been talking to Count Pushkin the evening of the concert, and whom I had seen him leave for Miss Leigh. We were soon in the midst of a conversation in which I did the questioning and she did most of the talking and she threw considerable light on a number of the visitors, whom

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she divided into various classes characterized in a vernacular of her own. Some were "frumps," some were "stiffs," and some were "old soaks"—the latter appellation, as I gathered, not implying any special addiction to spirituous liquors on the part of those so characterized, but only indicating the young woman's gauge of their merits. Still, she was amusing enough for a time, and appeared to be always ready to "die laughing" over everything. Like myself, she seemed rather inclined to keep her eye on the door, where I was watching for the possible appearance of the one who had brought me there. I was recalled from a slight straying of my mind from some story she was telling, by her saying:

"You're a lawyer, aren't you?"

Feeling rather flattered at the suggestion, and thinking that I must have struck her as intellectual-looking, I admitted the fact and asked her why she thought so.

"Oh! because they're the only people who have nothing to do and attend teas—young lawyers. I have seen you walking on the street when I was driving by."

"Well, you know you looked busier than I; but you weren't really," I said. I was a little taken aback by her asking if I knew Count Pushkin.

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"Oh, yes," I said. "I know him."

This manifestly made an impression.

"What do you think of him?"

"What do I think of him? When I know you a little better, I will tell you," I said. "Doesn't he attend teas?"

"Oh! yes, but then he is—he is something—a nobleman, you know."

"Do I?"

"Yes. Didn't you hear how last spring he stopped a runaway and was knocked down and dragged ever so far? Why, his face was all bruises."

I could not help laughing at the recollection of Pushkin.

"I saw that."

"Oh! did you? Do tell me about it. It was fine, wasn't it? Don't you think he's lovely?"

"Get him to tell you about it." I was relieved at that moment at a chance to escape her. I saw my hostess talking to a middle-aged, overdressed, but handsome woman whose face somehow haunted me with a reminiscence which I could not quite place, and as I happened to look in a mirror I saw they were talking of me, so I bowed to my young lady and moved on. The visitor asked who I was, and I could see the host-

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ess reply that she had not the slightest idea. She put up her lorgnon and scrutinized me attentively and then shook her head again. I walked over to where they sat.

“We were just saying, Mr.—ah—ah—Laze, that one who undertakes to do a little for one’s fellow-beings finds very little encouragement.” She spoke almost plaintively, looking first at me and then at her friend, who had been taking an inventory of the west side of the room and had not the slightest idea of what she was talking.

“I am overrun with beggars,” she proceeded.

Remembering her great reputation for charity, I thought this natural and suggested as much. She was pleased with my sympathy, and continued:

“Why, they invade me even in the privacy of my home. Not long ago, a person called and, though I had given instructions to my butler to deny me to persons, unless he knew their business and I know them, this man, who was a preacher and should have known better, pushed himself in and actually got into my drawing-room when I was receiving some of my friends. As he saw me, of course I could not excuse myself, and do you know, he had the insolence, not only to dictate to me how I should spend my money, but actually how I should manage my affairs!”

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"Oh! dear, think of that!" sighed the other lady. "And you, of all people!"

I admitted that this was extraordinary, and, manifestly encouraged, Mrs. Argand swept on.

"Why, he actually wanted me to forego my rents and let a person stay in one of my houses who would not pay his rent!"

"Incredible!"

"The man had had the insolence to hold on and actually force me to bring suit."

"Impossible!"

I began to wish I were back in my office. At this moment, however, succor came from an unexpected source.

"You know we have bought a house very near you?" interjected the blonde girl who had joined our group and suddenly broke in on our hostess's monologue.

"Ah! I should think you would feel rather lonely up here—and would miss all your old friends?" said Mrs. Argand sweetly, turning her eyes toward the door. The girl lifted her head and turned to the other lady.

"Not at all. You know lots of people call at big houses, Mrs. Gillis, just because they are big," said she, with a spark in her pale-blue eye, and I felt she was able to take care of herself.

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But Mrs. Argand did not appear to hear. She was looking over the heads of the rest of us with her eye on the door, when suddenly, as her servant in an unintelligible voice announced some one, her face lit up.

"Ah! My dear Count! How do you do? It was so good of you to come."

I turned to look just as Pushkin brushed by me and, with a little rush between the ladies seated near me, bent over and seizing her hand, kissed it zealously, while he uttered his compliments. It manifestly made a deep impression on the company. I was sure he had seen me. The effect on the company was remarkable. The blonde girl moved around a little and stood in front of another lady who pressed slightly forward.

"Count Pushkin!" muttered one lady to Mrs. Gillis, in an audible undertone.

"Oh! I know him well." She was evidently trying to catch the count's eye to prove her intimate acquaintance; but Pushkin was too much engrossed with or by our hostess to see her—or else was too busy evading my eye.

"Well, it's all up with me," I thought. "If I leave him here, my character's gone forever."

"Such a beautiful custom," murmured Mrs. Gillis's friend. "I always like it."

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"Now, do sit down and have a cup of tea," said our hostess. "I will make you a fresh cup." She glanced at a chair across the room and then at me, and I almost thought she was going to ask me to bring the chair for the count! But she thought better of it.

"Go and bring that chair and sit right here by me and let me know how you are."

"Here, take this seat," said Mrs. Gillis, who was rising, but whose eyes were fast on Pushkin's face.

"Oh! must you be going?" asked Mrs. Argand. "Well, good-by—so glad you could come."

"Yes, I must go. How do you do, Count Pushkin?"

"Oh! ah! How do you do?" said the count, turning with a start and a short bow.

"I met you at the ball not long ago. Miss McSheen introduced me to you. Don't you remember?" She glanced at the young lady who stood waiting.

"Ah! Yes—certainly! To be sure—Miss McSheen—ah! yes, I remember."

Doubtless, he did; for at this juncture the young lady I had been talking to, stepped forward and claimed the attention of the count, who, I thought, looked a trifle bored.

Feeling as if I were a mouse in a trap, I was

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about to try to escape when my intention was changed as suddenly as by a miracle, and, indeed, Eleanor Leigh's appearance at this moment seemed almost, if not quite, miraculous.

She had been walking rapidly in the wind and her hair was a little blown about—not too much—for I hate frowsy hair—just enough to give precisely the right touch of “sweet neglect” and naturalness to a pretty and attractive girl. Her cheeks were glowing, her eyes sparkling, her face lighted with some resolution which made it at once audacious and earnest, and as she came tripping into the room she suddenly transformed it, by giving it something of reality which it had hitherto lacked. She appeared like spring coming after winter. She hurried up to her aunt (who, I must say, looked pleased to see her and gave Pushkin an arch glance which I did not fail to detect), and then, after a dutiful and hasty kiss, she pulled up a chair and dashed into the middle of the subject which filled her mind. She was so eager about it that she did not pay the least attention to Pushkin, who, with his heels close together, and his back almost turned on the other girl, who was rattling on at his ear, was bowing and grinning like a Japanese toy; and she did not even see me, where I stood a little retired.

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"My dear, here is Count Pushkin trying to speak to you," said her aunt. "Come here, Miss McSheen, and tell me what you have been doing." She smiled at the blonde girl and indicated a vacated chair.

But Miss McSheen saw the trap—she had no idea of relinquishing her prize, and Miss Leigh did not choose to try for a capture.

"Howdydo, Count Pushkin," she said over her shoulder, giving the smiling and bowing Pushkin only half a nod and less than half a glance. "Oh! aunt," she proceeded, "I have such a favor to ask you. Oh, it's a most worthy object, I assure you—really worthy."

"How much is it?" enquired the older lady casually.

"I don't know yet. But wait—you must let me tell you about it, and you will see how good it is."

"My dear, I haven't a cent to give to anything," said her aunt. "I am quite strapped."

"I know, it's the family disease," said the girl lightly, and hurried on. "I am trying to do some work among the poor."

"The poor!" exclaimed her aunt. "My dear, I am so tired of hearing about the poor, I don't know what to do. I am one of the poor myself."

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My agent was here this morning and tells me that any number of my tenants are behind on their rents and several of my best tenants have given notice that on the expiration of their present terms, they want a reduction of their rents."

"I know," said the girl. "They are out of work. They are all ordered out, or soon will be, papa says, poor things! I have been to-day to see a poor family——"

"Out of work! Of course they are out of work! They *won't* work, that's why they are out—and now they are talking of a general strike! As if they hadn't had strikes enough. I shall cut down my charities; that's what I shall do."

"Oh! aunt, don't do that!" exclaimed the girl. "They are so poor. If you could see a poor family I saw this morning. Why, they have nothing—nothing! They are literally starving."

"Well, they have themselves to thank, if they are." She was now addressing the count, and two or three ladies seated near her on the edge of their chairs.

"Very true!" sighed one of the latter.

"I know," said the count. "I haf read it in th' papers to-day t'at t'ey vill what you call strike. T'ey should be—vhat you call, put down."

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"Of course they should. It almost makes one despair of mankind," chimed in Mrs. Gillis, who, though standing, could not tear herself away. As she stood buttoning at a glove, I suddenly recalled her standing at the foot of a flight of steps looking with cold eyes at a child's funeral.

"Yes, their ingratitude! It does, indeed," said Mrs. Argand. "My agent—ah! your husband—says I shall have to make repairs that will take up every bit of the rents of any number of my houses—and two of my largest warehouses. I have to repair them, of course. And then if this strike really comes, why, he says it will cost our city lines alone—oh! I don't know how much money. But I hate to talk about money. It is so sordid!" She sat back in her chair.

"Yes, indeed," assented the bejewelled lady she addressed. "I don't even like to think about it. I would like just to be able to draw my cheque for whatever I want and never hear the word *money*—like you, Mrs. Argand. But one can't do it," she sighed. "Why, my mail——"

"Why don't you do as I do?" demanded Mrs. Argand, who had no idea of having the conversation taken away from her in her own house. "My secretary opens all those letters and destroys them. I consider it a great impertinence for any one

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whom I don't know to write to me, and, of course, I don't acknowledge those letters. My agent——”

“My dear, we must go,” said the lady nearest her to her companion. As the two ladies swept out they stopped near me to look at a picture, and one of them said to the other:

“Did you ever hear a more arrogant display in all your life? Her secretary! Her interest—her duties! As if we didn't all have them!”

“Yes, indeed. And her agent! That's my husband!”

“But I do think she was right about that man's pushing in——”

“Oh! yes, about that—she was, but she need not be parading her money before us. My husband made it for old Argand.”

“My husband says the Argand Estate is vilely run, that they have the worst tenements in the city and charge the highest rents.”

“Do you know that my husband is her—agent?”

“Is he? Why, to be sure; but of course, she is responsible.”

“Yes, she's the cause of it.”

“And they pay more for their franchises than any one else. Why, my husband says that Coll McSheen, who is the lawyer of the Argand Estate, is the greatest briber in this city. I suppose he'll

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be buying a count next. I don't see how your husband stands him. He's so refined—such a——”

“Well, they have to have business dealings together, you know.”

“Yes. They say he just owns the council, and now he's to be mayor.”

“I know.”

“Did you see that article in the paper about him and his methods, charging that he was untrue to every one in town, even the Canters and Argands who employed him?”

“Oh, didn't I? I tell my husband he'd better be sure which side to take. One reason I came to-day was to see how she took it.”

“So did I,” said her friend. “They say the first paper was written by a Jew. It was a scathing indictment. It charged him with making a breach between Mr. Leigh and Mrs. Argand, and now with trying to ruin Mr. Leigh.”

“And it was written by a Jew? Was it, indeed? I should like to meet him, shouldn't you? But, of course, we couldn't invite him to our homes. Do you know anybody who might invite him to lunch and ask us to meet him? It would be so interesting to hear him talk.”

So they passed out, and I went up to make my adieux to our hostess, secretly intending to remain

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longer if I could get a chance to talk to her niece, who was now presenting her petition to her, while the count, with his eye on her while he pretended to listen to Miss McSheen, stood by waiting like a cat at a mousehole.

As I approached, Miss Leigh glanced up, and I flattered myself for weeks that it was not only surprise, but pleasure, that lighted up her face.

"Why, how do you do?" she said, and I extended my hand, feeling as shy as I ever did in my life, but as though paradise were somewhere close at hand.

"Where did you two know each other?" demanded her aunt, suspiciously, and I saw Pushkin's face darken, even while the blonde girl rattled on at his ear.

"Why, this is the gentleman who had the poor children on the train that day last spring. They are the same children I have been telling you about."

"Yes, but I did not know you had ever really met."

"That was not the only time I have had the good fortune to meet Miss Leigh," I said. I wanted to add that I hoped to have yet better fortune hereafter; but I did not.

Perhaps, it was to save me embarrassment that

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Miss Leigh said: "Mr. Glave and I teach in the same Sunday-school."

"Yes, about the she-bears," I hazarded, thinking of one at the moment.

Miss Leigh laughed. "I have been trying to help your little friends since; I am glad the she-bears did not devour them; I think they are in much more danger from the wolf at the door; in fact, it was about them that I came to see my aunt to-day."

I cursed my folly for not having carried out my intention of going to look after them, and registered a vow to go often thereafter.

"I was so glad you won their case for them," she said in an undertone, moving over toward me, as several new visitors entered. A warm thrill ran all through my veins. "But how did you manage to get here?" she asked with twinkling eyes. "Does she know, or has she forgiven you?"

"She doesn't know—at least, I haven't told her."

"Well, I should like to be by—that is, in a balcony—when she finds out who you are."

"Do you think I was very—bold to come?"

"Bold! Well, wait till she discovers who you are, Richard Cœur de Lion."

"Not I—you see that door? Well, you just watch me. I came for a particular reason that

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made me think it best to come—and a very good one,” I added, and glanced at her and found her still smiling.

“What was it?” She looked me full in the face.

“I will tell you some time——”

“No, now.”

“No, next Sunday afternoon, if you will let me walk home with you after you have explained the she-bears.”

She nodded “All right,” and I rose up into the blue sky. I almost thought I had wings.

“My aunt is really a kind woman—I can do almost anything with her.”

“Do you think that proves it?” I said. I wanted to say that I was that sort of a kind person myself, but I did not dare.

“My father says she has a foible—she thinks she is a wonderful business woman, because she can run up a column of figures correctly, and that she makes a great to-do over small things, and lets the big ones go. She would not take his advice; so he gave up trying to advise her and she relies on two men who flatter and deceive her.”

“Yes.”

“I don’t see how she can keep those two men, McSheen and Gillis, as her counsel and agent.

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But I suppose she found them there and does not like to change. My father says——”

Just then Mrs. Argand, after a long scrutiny of us through her lorgnon, said rather sharply:

“Eleanor!”

Miss Leigh turned hastily and plunged into a sentence.

“Aunt, you do not know how much good the little chapel you helped out in the East Side does. Mr. Mar—the preacher there gets places for poor people that are out of employment, and——”

“I suppose he does, but save me from these preachers! Why, one of them came here the other day and would not be refused. He actually forced himself into my house. He had a poor family or something, he said, and he wanted me to undertake to support them. And when I came to find out, they were some of my own tenants who had positively refused to pay any rent, and had held on for months to one of my houses without paying me a penny.” She had evidently forgotten that she had just said this a moment before. “I happened to remember,” she added, “because my agent told me the man’s name, O’Neil.”

“McNeil!” exclaimed Miss Leigh. “Why, that is the name of my poor family!” She cut hereye over toward me with a quizzical sparkle in it.

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“What! Well, you need not come to me about that man. My counsel said he was one of the worst characters he knew; a regular anarchist—one of these Irish—you know! And when I afterward tried to collect my rents, he got some upstart creature of a lawyer to try and defeat me, and actually did defraud me of my debt.”

This was a centre shot for me, and I wondered what she would think if she ever found out who the upstart was. The perspiration began to start on my forehead. It was clear that I must get away. She was, however, in such a full sweep that I could not get in a word to say good-by.

“But I soon gave Mr. Marble, or whatever his name was, a very different idea of the way he should behave when he came to see a lady. I let him know that I preferred to manage my affairs and select my own objects of charity, without being dictated to by any one, and that I did not propose to help anarchists. And I soon gave Mr. McNeil to understand whom he had to deal with. I ordered him turned out at once—instantly.” She was now addressing me.

She was so well satisfied with her position that I must have looked astonished, and I had not at first a word to say. This she took for acquiescence.

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"That was, perhaps, the greatest piece of insolence I ever knew!" she continued. "Don't you think so?"

"Well, no, I do not," I said bluntly.

For a moment or so her face was a perfect blank, then it was filled with amazement. Her whole person changed. Her head went up—her eyes flashed, her color deepened.

"Oh!" she said. "Perhaps, we look at the matter from different stand-points?" rearing back more stiffly than ever.

"Unquestionably, madam. I happen to know John Marvel, the gentleman who called on you, very well, and I know him to be one of the best men in the world. I know that he supported that poor family out of his own small income, and when they were turned out of their house, fed them until he could get the father some work to do. He was not an anarchist, but a hard-working Scotchman, who had been ill and had lost his place."

"Oh!" she said—this time with renewed superciliousness, raising her lorgnon to observe some new-comers.

"Perhaps, you happen also to know McNeil's counsel—perhaps, you are the man yourself?" she added insolently.

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I bowed low. "I am."

The truth swept over her like a flood. Before she recovered, I bowed my adieux, of which, so far as I could see, she took no notice. She turned to Pushkin, as Miss Leigh, from behind a high-backed chair, held out her hand to me. "Well, poor McNeil's done for now," she said in an undertone. But as the latter smiled in my eyes, I did not care what her aunt said.

"Ah! my dear Count, here is the tea at last," I heard our hostess say, and then she added solicitously, "I have not seen you for so long. Why have you denied yourself to your friends? You have quite gotten over your accident of the spring? I read about it in the papers at the time. Such a noble thing to have stopped those horses. You must tell me about it. How did it happen?"

I could not help turning to give Pushkin one look, and he hesitated and stammered. I came out filled with a new sense of what was meant by the curses against the Pharisees. As I was walking along I ran into Wolffert.

"Ah! You are the very man," he exclaimed. "It is Providence! I was just thinking of you, and you ran into my arms. It is Fate."

It did seem so. Mrs. Argand and her "dear

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count'' had sickened me. Here, at least, was sincerity. But I wondered if he knew that Miss Leigh was within there.

XXIV

WOLFFERT'S MISSION

WOLFFERT naturally was somewhat surprised to see me come sallying forth from Mrs. Argand's; for he knew what I had not known when I called there, that she was the real owner of "The Argand Estate."

I gave him an account of my interview with the lady.

"I was wondering," he said, laughing, "what you were doing in there after having beaten her in that suit. I thought you had taken your nerve with you. I was afraid you had fallen a victim to her blandishments."

"To whose?"

"Mrs. Argand's. She is the true Circe of the time, and her enchantment is one that only the strong can resist. She reaches men through their bellies."

"Oh!" I was thinking of quite another person, who alone could beguile me, and I was glad that he was not looking at me.

He was, however, too full of another subject to

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notice me, and as we walked along, I told him of the old lady's views about John Marvel. He suddenly launched out against her with a passion which I was scarcely prepared for, as much as I knew he loved John Marvel. Turning, he pointed fiercely back at the great prison-like mansion.

"Do you see that big house?" His long finger shook slightly—an index of his feeling.

"Yes."

"Every stone in it is laid in mortar cemented with the tears of widows and orphans, and the blood of countless victims of greed and oppression."

"Oh! nonsense! I have no brief for that old woman. I think she is an ignorant, arrogant, purse-proud, ill-bred old creature, spoiled by her wealth and the adulation that it has brought her from a society of sycophants and parasites; but I do not believe that at heart she is bad." She had had a good advocate defend her to me and I was quoting her. Wolffert was unappeased.

"That is it. She sets up to be the paragon of Generosity, the patron of Charity, the example of Kindness for all to follow. She never gave a cent in her life—but only a portion—a small portion of the money wrung from the hearts of others. Her fortune was laid in corruption. Her old hus-

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band—I knew him!—he robbed every one, even his partners. He defrauded his benefactor, Colonel Tipps, who made him, and robbed his heirs of their inheritance.”

“How?” For I was much interested now.

“By buying up their counsel, and inducing him to sell them out and making him his counsel. And now that old woman keeps him as her counsel and adviser, though he is the worst man in this city, guilty of every crime on the statute-books, sacred and profane.”

“But she does not know that?”

“Not know it? Why doesn’t she know it? Because she shuts her doors to the men who do know it, and her ears to the cries of his victims. Doesn’t every one who cares to look into the crimes in this city know that Coll McSheen is the protector of Vice, and that he could not exist a day if the so-called good people got up and determined to abolish him—that he is the owner of the vilest houses in this city—the vilest because they are not so openly vile as some others? Isn’t she trying to sell her niece to an adventurer for a title, or a reprobate for his money?”

“Is she?” My blood suddenly began to boil, and I began to get a new insight into Wolffert’s hostility.

WOLFFERT'S MISSION

We had turned toward John Marvel's. He appeared a sort of landmark to which to turn as we were dealing with serious subjects, and Wolffert was on his way there when I encountered him. As we walked along, he disclosed a system of vice so widespread, so horrible and so repulsive that I hesitate to set it down. He declared that it extended over not only all the great cities of the country, but over all the great cities of all countries.

I related the story the poor girl I had met that night on the street had told me, but I frankly asserted that I did not believe that it could be as general as he claimed.

"‘Smooth Ally,’ was it?" said Wolffert, who knew of her. "She is the smoothest and worst of them all, and she is protected by McSheen, who in turn is protected by clients like The Argand Estate. What became of her?" he demanded.

"Why, I don't know. I turned her over to the Salvationists—and—and I—rather left her to them."

I was beginning to feel somewhat meek under his scornful expression.

"That is always the way," he said. "We look after them for an hour and then drop them back into perdition."

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"But I placed her in good hands. That is their business."

"Their business! Why is it not your business too? How can you shift the responsibility? It is every one's business. Listen!" He had been recently to southern Russia, where, he said, the system of scoundrelism he described had one of its prolific sources, and he gave figures of the numbers of victims—girls of his own race—gathered up throughout the provinces and shipped from Odessa and other ports, to other countries, including America, to startle one.

"Time was when not a Jewess was to be found on the streets; but now!" He threw out his hand with a gesture of rage, and went on. He averred that many steamship officials combined to connive at the traffic, and that the criminals were shielded by powerful friends who were paid for their protection.

"Why, there are in this city to-night," he declared, "literally thousands of women who have, without any fault of theirs, but ignorance, vanity, and credulity, been drawn into and condemned to a life of vice and misery such as the mind staggers to believe."

"At least, if they are, they are in the main willing victims," I argued. "There may be a few

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instances like the girl I saw, but for the most part they have done it of their own volition."

Wolffert turned on me with fire flaming in his deep eyes. "Of their own volition! What is their volition? In fact, most of them are not voluntary accomplices. But if they were—it is simple ignorance on their part, and is that any reason for their undergoing the tortures of the damned in this world, not to mention what your Church teaches of the next world? Who brought them there—the man who deceived and betrayed them? Who acted on their weakness and drew them in?—their seducers?—the wretches who lure them to their destruction?—Not at all! Jail-birds and scoundrels as they are, deserving the gallows if any one does, which I do not think any one does—but you do—the ultimate miscreant is not even the Coll McSheens who protect it, but Society which permits it to go on unchecked when, by the least serious and sensible effort, it could prevent it."

"How?" I demanded.

"How! By determining to prevent it and then organizing to do so. By simply being honest. Has it not broken up the institution of slavery—highway robbery, organized murder—except by itself and its members? Of course, it could pre-

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vent it if it set itself to do it. But it is so steeped in selfishness and hypocrisy that it has no mind to anything that interferes with its pleasures."

We had now reached John Marvel's, where we found John, just back from a visit to a poor girl who was ill, and his account only added fuel to Wolffert's flaming wrath. He was pacing up and down the floor, as small as it was, his face working, his eyes flashing, and suddenly he let a light in on his ultimate motive. He launched out in a tirade against existing social conditions that exceeded anything I had ever heard. He declared that within hearing of the most opulent and extravagant class the world had ever known were the cries and groans of the most wretched; that the former shut their ears and their eyes to it, and, contenting themselves with tossing a few pennies to a starving multitude, went on wallowing like swine in their own voluptuousness. "Look at the most talked of young man in this city to-day, the *bon parti*, the coveted of aspiring mothers. He lives a life to make a beast blush. He is a seducer of women, a denizen of brothels; a gambler in the life-blood of women and children, a fatted swine, yet he is the courted and petted of those who call themselves the best people! Faugh! it makes me sick."

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This was to some extent satisfactory to me, for I detested Canter; but I wondered if Wolffert did not have the same reason for disliking him that I had.

"There was never so selfish and hypocritical a society on earth," he exclaimed, "as this which now exists. In times past, under the feudal system, there was apparently some reason for the existence of the so-called upper classes—the first castle built made necessary all the others—the chief, at least, protected the subjects from the rapine of others, and he was always ready to imperil his life; but now—this! When they all claim to know, and do know much, they sit quiet in their own smug content like fatted swine, and let rapine, debauchery, and murder go on as it never has gone on in the last three hundred years."

"What are you talking about?" I demanded, impressed by his vehemence, but mystified by his furious indictment. He cooled down for a moment, and wiped his hand across his eyes.

"I am fresh from the scene of as brutal a butchery," he said, "as has taken place within a thousand years. Israel is undergoing to-day the most extensive and complete persecution that has existed since the close of the crusades. No wonder the young women fall victims to the scoun-

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drels who offer them an asylum in a new land and lure them to their destruction with gifts of gold and words of peace. And this is what Society does—the virtue-boasting Society of the twentieth century! They speak of anarchy!—What they mean is a condition which disturbs the repose of the rich and powerful. There is anarchy now—the anarchy that consists of want of equal government for rich and poor alike. Look at John Marvel, here, preaching a gospel of universal love and acting it, too.”

“Wolffert,” said Marvel, softly, “don’t. Leave me out—you know I do not—you are simply blinded by your affection for me——”

But Wolffert swept on. “Yes, he does—if any man ever does—he lives for others—and what does he get? Shunted off by a fat, sleek, self-seeking priest, who speaks smooth things to a people who will have nothing else.”

“Wolffert, you must not,” protested John; “I cannot allow you.”

But Wolffert was in full tide. With a gesture he put John’s protest by. “—To preach and teach the poor how to be patient—how to suffer in silence——”

“Now, Leo,” said John, taking him by the shoulders, “I must stop you—you are just tired,

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excited—overworked. If they suffer patiently they are so much the better off—their lot will be all the happier in the next world.”

Wolffert sat down on the bed with a smile. “What are you going to do with such a man?” he said to me, with a despairing shrug. “And you know the curious thing is he believes it.”

I went to my own room, feeling still like the prodigal, and that I had somehow gotten back home. But I had a deeper and more novel feeling. A new light had come to me, faintly, but still a light. What had I ever done except for myself? Here were two men equally as poor as I, living the life of self-denial—one actually by choice, the other as willingly and uncomplainingly as though it were by choice, and both not only content but happy. Why should not I enter the brotherhood? Here was something far higher and nobler than anything I had ever contemplated taking part in. What was it that withheld me? Was it, I questioned myself, that I, with no association whatever in the town except the poor, yet belonged to the class that Wolffert crusaded against? Was there something fundamentally wrong with society? I could not enter freely into Wolffert's rhapsody of hate for the oppressors, nor yet into John Marvel's quiet, deep,

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and unreasoning love of Mankind. Yet I began to see dimly things I had never had a glimmer of before.

The association with my old friends made life a wholly different thing for me, and I made through them many new friends. They were very poor and did not count for much in the world; but they were real people, and their life, simple and insignificant as it was, was real and without sham. I found, indeed, that one got much nearer to the poor than to the better class—their life was more natural; small things matter so much more to them. In fact, the smallest thing may be a great thing to a poor man. Also I found a kindness and generosity quite out of proportion to that of the well-to-do. However poor and destitute a man or a family might be, there was always some one poorer and more destitute, and they gave with a generosity that was liberality, indeed. For they gave of their penury what was their living. Whatever the organized charities may do, and they do much, the poor support the poor and they rely on each other to an extent unknown among their more fortunate fellow-citizens. As the Egyptian always stops to lift another's load, so here I found men always turning in to lend their aid.

Thus, gradually in the association of my friends

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who were working among the poor and helping to carry their burdens, I began to find a new field and to reap in it a content to which I had long been a stranger. Also life began to take on for me a wholly new significance; as a field of work in which a man might escape from the slavery of a selfish convention which cramped the soul, into a larger life where service to mankind was the same with service to God, a life where forms were of small import and where the Christian and the Jew worked shoulder to shoulder and walked hand in hand. How much of my new feeling was due to Miss Eleanor Leigh, I did not take the trouble to consider.

"Father," said Eleanor, that evening, "I have a poor man whom I want a place for, and I must have it."

Mr. Leigh smiled. "You generally do have. Is this one poorer than those others you have saddled on me?"

"Now don't be a tease. Levity is not becoming in a man of your dignity. This man is very poor, indeed, and he has a houseful of children—and his wife——"

"I know," said Mr. Leigh, throwing up his hand with a gesture of appeal. "I surrender. They all have. What can this one do? Butts says every

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foreman in the shops is complaining that we are filling up with a lot of men who don't want to do anything and couldn't do it if they did."

"Oh! This man is a fine workman. He is an expert machinist—has worked for years in boiler-shops—has driven——"

"Why is he out of a job if he is such a universal paragon? Does he drink? Remember, we can't take in men who drink—a bucket of beer cost us twelve thousand dollars last year, not to mention the loss of two lives."

"He is as sober as a judge," declared his daughter, solemnly.

"What is it then?—Loafer?"

"He lost his place where he lived before by a strike."

"A striker, is he! Well, please excuse me. I have a plenty of that sort now without going outside to drag them in."

"No—no—no—" exclaimed Eleanor. "My! How you do talk! You won't give me a chance to say a word!"

"I like that," laughed her father. "Here I have been listening patiently to a catalogue of the virtues of a man I never heard of and simply asking questions, and as soon as I put in a pertinent one, away you go."

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"Well, listen. You have heard of him. I'll tell you who he is. You remember my telling you of the poor family that was on the train last year when I came back in Aunt Sophia's car and we delayed the train?"

"I remember something about it. I never was sure as to the facts in the case. I only know that that paper contained a most infamous and lying attack on me——"

"I know it—it was simply infamous—but this poor man had nothing to do with it. That was his family, and they came on to join him because he had gotten a place. But the Union turned him out because he didn't belong to it, and then he wanted to join the Union, but the walking-delegate or something would not let him, and now he has been out of work so long that they are simply starving."

"You want some money, I suppose?" Mr. Leigh put his hand in his pocket.

"No. I have helped him, but he isn't a beggar—he wants work. He's the real thing, dad, and I feel rather responsible, because Aunt Sophia turned them out of the house they had rented and—though that young lawyer I told you of won his case for him and saved his furniture—the little bit he had—he has lost it all through the loan-

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sharks who eat up the poor. I tried to get Aunt Sophia to make her man, Gillis, let up on him, but she wouldn't interfere."

"That's strange, for she is not an unkind woman—she is only hard-set in certain ways which she calls her principles."

"Yes, it was rather unfortunate. You see, Mr. Glave was there and Aunt Sophia!—you should have seen her."

She proceeded to give an account of Mrs. Argand's discovery of my identity, and to take us both off.

"They didn't pay the rent, I suppose?"

"Yes. But it was not his fault—just their misfortune. His wife's illness and being out of work and all—it just piled up on top of him. A man named Ring—something—a walking-delegate whom he used to know back in the East, got down on him, and followed him up, and when he was about to get in the Union, he turned him down. And, dad, you've just got to give him a place."

"Wringman, possibly," said Mr. Leigh. "There's a man of that name in the city who seems to be something of a leader. He's a henchman of Coll McSheen and does his dirty work for him. He has been trying to make trouble for us for

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some time. Send your man around to Butts to-morrow, and I'll see what we can do for him."

Eleanor ran and flung her arms around her father's neck. "Oh! dad! If you only knew what a load you have lifted from my shoulders. I believe Heaven will bless you for this."

"I know Butts will," said Mr. Leigh, kissing her. "How's our friend, the Marvel, coming on?"

"Dad, he's a saint!"

"So I have heard before," said Mr. Leigh. "And that other one—how is he?"

"Which one?"

"Is there any other but the Jew? I have not heard of another reforming saint."

"No, he is a sinner," said Eleanor, laughing; and she went on to give an account of my episode with Pushkin, which she had learned from John Marvel, who, I may say, had done me more than justice in his relation of the matter.

"So the count thought a team had run over him, did he?"

"Yes, that's what Mr. Marvel said."

She related a brief conversation which had taken place between her and Pushkin and Mrs. Argand, after I left, in which Pushkin had undertaken to express his opinion of me, and she had given him to understand that she knew the true

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facts in the matter of our collision. All of which I learned much later.

"Well, I must say," said Mr. Leigh, "your new friend appears to have 'his nerve with him,' as you say."

"Dad, I never use slang," said Miss Eleanor, severely. "I am glad you have promised to give poor McNeil a place, for, if you had not, I should have had to take him into the house."

Mr. Leigh laughed.

"I am glad, too, if that is the case. The last one you took in was a reformed drunkard, you said, and you know what happened to him and also to my wine."

"Yes, but this one is all right."

"Of course he is."

There was joy next day in one poor little household, for McNeil, who had been dragging along through the streets for days with a weight, the heaviest the poor have to bear, bowing him down—want of work—came into his little bare room where his wife and children huddled over an almost empty stove, with a new step and a fresh note in his voice. He had gotten a place and it meant life to him and to those he loved.

XXV

FATE LEADS

ONE evening I called at Mrs. Kale's to see my two old ladies of the bundles and also Mrs. Kale, for whom I had conceived a high regard on account of her kindness to the former as well as to myself, and in the course of my visit Miss Pansy gave me, for not the first time, an account of the way in which they had been reduced from what they thought affluence to what she very truly called "straitened circumstances." I confess that I was rather bored by her relation, which was given with much circumlocution until she mentioned casually that Miss Leigh had tried to interest her father in their case, but he had said it was too late to do anything. The mention of her name instantly made me alert. If she was interested, I was interested also. I began to ask questions, and soon had their whole story as well as she could give it.

"Why, it may or may not be too late," I said. "It is certainly very long ago, and the chances of

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being able to do anything now are very remote; but if there was a fraud, and it could be proved, it would not be too late—or, at least, might not be.”

“Oh! Do you think that you could recover anything for us? Mr. McSheen said nothing could be gotten out of it, and we paid him—a great deal,” she sighed, “—everything we had in the world, almost.”

“I do not say that, but if there was a fraud, and it could be proved, it might not be too late.”

The name of McSheen had given me a suspicion that all might not be straight. Nothing could be if he was connected with it. I recalled what Wolfert had told me of McSheen’s selling out. Moreover, her story had unconsciously been a moving one. They had evidently been hardly used and, I believed, defrauded. So, when she pressed me, and promised if she were ever able to do so she “would reward me generously,” as if, poor soul, she could ever reward any one save with her prayers, I undertook to look into the matter for them, and I began next day.

I will not go into the steps I took to reach my ends, nor the difficulties I encountered, which grew as I progressed in my investigation until they appeared almost insurmountable; but finally I

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struck a lead which at last led me to a conviction that if I could but secure the evidence I could establish such a case of fraud for my two old clients as would give promise of a fair chance to recover for them, at least, a part of their patrimony. The difficulty, or one of them—for they were innumerable—was that to establish their case it was necessary to prove that several men who had stood high in the public esteem, had been guilty of such disregard of the rights of those to whom they stood in the relation of trustees that it would be held a fraud. I was satisfied that had McSheen taken proper steps to secure his clients' rights, he might have succeeded, and further, that he had been bought off, but the difficulty was to prove it.

However, I determined to make the effort to get the proof and my zeal was suddenly quickened.

I had now begun to watch for my young lady wherever I went, and it was astonishing how my quickened senses enabled me to find her in the most crowded thoroughfare, or in strange and out-of-the-way places. It was almost as if there were some secret power which drew us together. And when I was blessed to meet her the day was always one of sunshine for me, however heavy lowered the dim clouds.

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The next afternoon our meeting was so unexpected that I could not but set it down to the ruling of a higher power. I had gone out to see how my McNeil clients were coming on, having doubtless some latent hope that I might find her there; but she had not been there for several days. They had heard of her, however, for she had got the husband and father a place and that made sunshine in the wretched little hovel, as bare as it was. I was touched by their gratitude, and after taking note of the wretched poverty of the family, and promising that I would try to get the mother some sort of work, I strolled on. I had not gone far when I suddenly came on her face to face. The smile that came into her eyes must have brought my soul into my face.

Love is the true miracle-worker. It can change the most prosaic region into a scene of romance. At sight of Eleanor Leigh's slim figure the dull street suddenly became an enchanted land.

"Well, we appear fated to meet," she said with a smile and intonation that my heart feasted on for days. She little knew how assiduously I had played Fate during these past weeks, haunting the streets near her home or those places which she blessed with her presence. This meeting, however, was purely accidental, unless it be true, as

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I sometimes almost incline to think, that some occult power which we cannot understand rules all our actions and guides our footsteps toward those we love supremely. John Marvel always called it Providence.

"Well, may I not see you home?" I asked, and without waiting for her consent, I took it for granted and turned back with her, though she protested against taking me out of my way. I had indeed some difficulty in not saying then and there, "My way is where you are."

She had been to see one of her scholars who was sick, "the little cripple, whom you know," she said. I suddenly began to think cripples the most interesting of mortals. She gave me, as we strolled along, an account of her first acquaintance with her and her mother; and of how John Marvel had found out their condition and helped them. Then she had tried to help them a little, and had gotten the mother to let her have the little girl at her school.

"Now they are doing a little better," she said, "but you never saw such wretchedness. The woman had given up everything in the world to try to save her husband, and such a wretched hole as they lived in you couldn't imagine. They did not have a single article of furniture in their room

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when I—when Mr. Marvel first found them. It had all gone to the Loan Company—they were starving.”

John Marvel had a nose like a pointer for all who were desolate and oppressed. How he discovered them, except, as Eleanor Leigh said, by some sort of a sixth sense like that of the homing pigeon, surpasses my comprehension. It is enough that he found and furrowed them out. Thus, he had learned that a little girl, a child of a noted criminal, had been ill-treated by the children at a public school and that her mother and herself were almost starving, and had hastened at once to find her. Like a hunted animal she had gone and hidden herself in what was scarcely better than a den. Here John Marvel found her, in a wretched cellar, the mother ill on a pallet of straw, and both starving, without food or fire. The door was barred, as was her heart, and it was long before any answer came to the oft-repeated knock. But at last his patience was rewarded. The door opened a bare inch, and a fierce black eye in a haggard white face peered at him through the chink.

“What do you want?”

“To help you.”

The door opened slowly and John Marvel en-

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tered an abode which he said to me afterward he was glad for the first time in his life to be so near-sighted as not to be able to see. A pallet of rags lay in a corner, and on a box crouched, rather than sat, a little girl with a broken crutch by her side, her eyes fastened on the new-comer with a gaze of half bewilderment. It was some time before John Marvel could get anything out of the woman, but he held a key which at last unlocks every heart—a divine and penetrating sympathy. And presently the woman told him her story. Her husband was a fugitive from justice. She did not say so, but only that he had had to leave the city because the police were after him. His friends had turned against him and against her. She did not know where her husband was, but believed he had left the country, unless, indeed, he were dead. She was waiting to hear from him, and meantime everything which she had had gone, and now, though she did not say so, they were starving. To relieve them was as instinctive with John Marvel as to breathe. The next step was to help them permanently. It was hard to do, because the woman was at bay and was as suspicious as a she-wolf, and the child was as secretive as a young cub. John turned to one, however, who he believed, and with good reason,

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knew how to do things which were lost to his dull comprehension.

The following day into that den walked Eleanor Leigh, and it was to visit this woman and her child that she was going the morning I met her coming down the steps, when she dropped her violets on the sidewalk. It was a hard task which John Marvel had set her, for as some women may yield to women rather than to men, so there are some who are harder to reach by the former than by the latter, and the lot of Red Talman's wife had separated her from her sex and turned her into a state where she felt that all women were against her. But Eleanor Leigh was equal to the task; having gained admission through the open sesame of John Marvel's name, she first applied herself to win the child. Seating herself on the box, she began to play with the little girl and to show her the toys she had brought—toys which the child had never seen before. It was not long before the little thing was in her lap and then the woman had been won. When Eleanor Leigh came away everything had been arranged, and the following night Red Talman's wife and child moved to another quarter of the town, to a clean little room not far from the small school on the way to which I first met the little waif.

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"But you don't go into such places by yourself?" I said to her when she had told me their story. "Why, it might cost you your life."

"Oh, no! No one is going to trouble me. I am not afraid."

"Well, it is not safe," I protested. "I wish you wouldn't do it." It was the first time I had ever ventured to assume such an attitude toward her. "I don't care how brave you are, it is not safe."

"Oh! I am not brave at all. In fact, I am an awful coward. I am afraid of mice and all such ferocious beasts—and as to a spider—why, little Miss Muffet was a heroine to me."

"I know," I nodded, watching the play of expression in her eyes with secret delight.

"But I am not afraid of people. They are about the only things I am not afraid of. They appear to me so pitiful in their efforts. Why should one fear them? Besides, I don't think about myself when I am doing anything—only about what I am doing."

"What is the name of your little protégée's father—the criminal?" I asked.

"Talman—they call him 'Red Talman.' He's quite noted, I believe."

"'Red Talman!' Why, he is one of the most noted criminals in the country. I remember

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reading of his escape some time ago. He was in for a long term. It was said no prison could hold him."

"Yes, he has escaped," she said demurely.

I once more began to protest against her going about such places by herself as she had described, but she only laughed at me for my earnestness. She had also been to see the Miss Tipples, she said, and she gave an amusing and, at the same time, a pathetic account of Miss Pansy's brave attempt to cover up their poverty.

"It is hard to do anything for them. One can help the Talmans; but it is almost impossible to help the decayed gentlefolk. One has to be so careful not to appear to know her pathetic little deceits, and I find myself bowing and accepting all her little devices and transparent deceptions of how comfortable they are, when I know that maybe she may be faint with hunger at that very time."

I wondered if she knew their story. But she suddenly said:

"Tell me about their case. I do trust you can win it."

I was only too ready to tell her anything. So, as we walked along I told her all I knew or nearly all.

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"Oh! you must win it! To think that such robbery can be committed! There must be some redress! Who were the wretches who robbed them? They ought to be shown up if they were in their graves! I hate to know things and not know the person who committed them." As she turned to me with flashing eyes, I felt a great desire to tell her, but how could I do so?

"Tell me. Do you know them?"

"Yes—some of them."

"Well, tell me their names."

"Why do you wish to know?" I hesitated.

"Because I do. Isn't that sufficient?"

I wanted to say yes, but still I hesitated.

"Was it anybody—I know?"

"Why——"

"I must know." Her eyes were on my face and I yielded.

"Mr. Argand was one of the directors—in fact, was the president of the road—but I have no direct proof—yet."

"Do you mean my aunt's husband?"

I nodded.

She turned her face away.

"I ought not to have told you," I added.

"Oh! yes, you ought. I would have wanted to know if it had been my father. I have the dearest

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father in the world. You do not know how good and kind he is, and how generous to every one. He has almost ruined himself working for others."

I said I had no doubt he was all she said; but my heart sank as I recalled my part in the paper I had written about him. I knew I must tell her some time, but I hesitated to do it now. I began to talk about myself, a subject I am rather fond of, but on this occasion I had possibly more excuse than usual.

"My mother also died when I was a child," she said, sighing, as I related the loss of mine and said that I was just beginning to realize what it was. It appeared to draw us nearer together. I was conscious of her sympathy, and under its influence I went on and told her the wretched story of my life, my folly and my failure, and my final resolve to begin anew and be something worth while. I did not spare myself and I made no concealments. I felt her sympathy and it was as sweet to me as ever was grace to a famished soul. I had been so long alone that it seemed to unlock Heaven.

"I believe you will succeed," she said, turning and looking me in the face.

A sudden fire sprang into my brain and throbbed in my heart. "If you will say that to me and mean it, I will."

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"I do believe it. Of course, I mean it." She stopped and looked me again full in the face, and her eyes seemed to me to hold the depths of Heaven: deep, calm, confiding, and untroubled as a child's. They stirred me deeply. Why should I not declare myself! She was, since her father's embarrassment, of which I had read, no longer beyond my reach. Did I not hold the future in fee? Why might not I win her?

For some time we drifted along, talking about nothing of moment, skirting the shore of the charmed unknown, deep within which lay the mystery of that which we both possibly meant, however indefinitely, to explore. Then we struck a little further in; and began to exchange experiences—first our early impressions of John Marvel and Wolffert. It was then that she told me of her coming to know John Marvel in the country that night during the epidemic. She did not tell of her part in the relief of the sick; but it was unnecessary. John Marvel had already told me that. It was John himself, with his wonderful unselfishness and gift of self-abnegation, of whom she spoke, and Wolffert with his ideal ever kept in sight.

"What turned you to philanthropy?" I asked with a shade of irony in my voice more marked

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than I had intended. If she was conscious of it she took no notice of it beyond saying:

“If you mean the poor, pitiful little bit of work I do trying to help Mr. Marvel and Mr. Wolffert among the poor—John Marvel did, and Mr. Wolffert made the duty clear. They are the complement of each other, Jew and Gentile, and if all men were like them there would be no divisions.”

I expressed my wonder that she should have kept on, and not merely contented herself with giving money or helping for that one occasion. Sudden converts generally relapse.

“Oh! it was not any conversion. It gave life a new interest for me. I was bored to death by the life I had been leading since I came out. It was one continuous round of lunches, dinners, parties, dances, soirées, till I felt as if I were a wooden steed in a merry-go-round, wound up and wearing out. You see, I had, in a way, always been ‘out.’ I used to go about with my father, and sit at the table and hear him and his friends—men friends—for I did not come to the table when ladies were there, till I was fifteen—talk about all sorts of things, and though I often did not understand them, I used to ask him and he would explain them, and then I read up and worked to try to amuse him, so that when I really came

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out, I found the set in which I was thrown rather young. It was as if I had fallen through an opened door into a nursery. I was very priggish, I have no doubt, but I was bored. Jim Canter and Milly McSheen were amusing enough for a while, but really they were rather young. I was fond of driving and dancing, but I did not want to talk about it all the time, and then as I got older——”

“How old?” I demanded, amused at her idea of age.

“Why, eighteen. How old do you think I should have been?”

“Oh! I don’t know; you spoke as if you were as old as Anna in the Temple. Pray go on.”

“Well, that’s all. I just could not stand it. Aunt Sophia was bent on my marrying—somebody whom I could not bear—and oh! it was an awful bore. I looked around and saw the society women I was supposed to copy, and I’d rather have been dead than like that—eating, clothes, and bridge—that made up the round, with men as the final end and reward. I think I had hardly taken it in, till my eyes were opened once by a man’s answer to a question as to who had been in the boxes at a great concert which he had attended and enjoyed: ‘Oh! I don’t know—the usual sort—women who go to be seen with other women’s

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husbands. The musical people were in the gallery listening.' Next time I went my eyes had been opened and I listened and enjoyed the music. So, when I discovered there were real men in the world doing things, and really something that women could do, too, I found that life had a new interest, that is all.

"You know," she said, after a pause in which she was reflecting and I was watching the play of expression in her face and dwelling in delicious reverie on the contour of her soft cheek—"you know, if I ever amount to anything in this world, it will be due to that man." This might have meant either.

I thought I knew of a better artificer than even John Marvel or Leo Wolffert, to whom was due all the light that was shed from her life, but I did not wish to question anything she said of old John. I was beginning to feel at peace with all the world.

We were dawdling along now and I remember we stopped for a moment in front of a place somewhat more striking-looking and better lighted than those about it, something between a pawnbroker's shop and a loan-office. The sign over the door was of a Guaranty Loan Company, and added the word "Home" to Guaranty. It caught my eye and hers at the same moment. The name

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was that of the robber-company in which my poor client, McNeil, in his futile effort to pay his rent, had secured a small loan by a chattel mortgage on his pitiful little furniture at something like three hundred per cent. The entire block belonged, as I had learned at the time, to the Argand Estate, and I had made it one of the points in my arraignment of that eleemosynary institution that the estate harbored such vampires as the two men who conducted this scoundrelly business in the very teeth of the law. On the windows were painted legends suggesting that within all money needed by any one might be gotten, one might have supposed, for nothing. I said, "With such a sign as that we might imagine that the poor need never want for money."

She suddenly flamed: "I know them. They are the greatest robbers on earth. They grind the face of the Poor until one wonders that the earth does not open and swallow them up quick. They are the thieves who ought to be in jail instead of such criminals as even that poor wretch, Talman, as great a criminal as he is. Why, they robbed his poor wife of every stick of furniture she had on earth, under guise of a loan, and turned her out in the snow with her crippled child. She was afraid to apply to any one for redress, and they

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knew it. And if it had not been for John Marvel they would have starved or have frozen to death."

"For John Marvel and you," I interjected.

"No—only him. What I did was nothing—less than nothing. He found them, with that wonderful sixth sense of his. It is his heart. And he gets no credit for anything—even from you. Oh! sometimes I cannot bear it. I would like to go to him once and just tell him what I truly think of him."

"Why don't you, then?"

"Because—I cannot. But if I were you, I would. He would not—want me to do it! But some day I am going to Dr. Capon and tell him—tell him the truth."

She turned, facing me, and stood with clenched hands, uplifted face, and flashing eyes—breasting the wind which, at the moment, blew her skirts behind her, and as she poured forth her challenge she appeared to me almost like some animate statue of victory.

"Do you know—I think Mr. Marvel and Mr. Wolffert are almost the most Christian men I ever saw; and their life is the strongest argument in favor of Christianity I ever knew."

"Why, Wolffert is a Jew—he is not a Christian at all."

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“He is—I only wish I were half as good a one,” she said. “I do not care what he calls himself, he is. Why, think of him beside Doctor—beside some of those who set up to be burning and shining lights!”

“Well, I will agree to that.” In fact, I agreed with everything she had said, though I confess to a pang of jealousy at such unstinted praise, as just as I thought it. And I began in my selfishness to wish I were more like either of her two models. As we stood in the waning light—for we were almost standing, we moved so slowly—my resolution took form.

It was not a propitious place for what I suddenly resolved to do. It was certainly not a romantic spot. For it was in the centre, the very heart, of a mean shopping district, a region of small shops and poor houses, and the autumn wind had risen with an edge on it and laden with dust, which made the thinly clad poor quicken their steps as they passed along and try to shrink closer within their threadbare raiment. The lights which were beginning to appear only added to the appearance of squalor about us. But like the soft Gallius I cared for none of these things. I saw only the girl beside me, whose awakened soul seemed to me even more beauti-

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ful than her beautiful frame. And so far as I was concerned, we might have been in Paradise or in a desert.

I recall the scene as if it were yesterday, the very softness in her face, the delicacy of her contour; the movement of her soft hair on her blue-veined white temple and her round neck as a gentle breath of air stirred it; the dreamy depths of her eyes as the smile faded in them and she relapsed into a reverie. An impulse seized me and I cast prudence, wisdom, reason, all to the winds and gave the rein to my heart.

"Come here." I took her arm and drew her a few steps beyond to where there was a vacant house. "Sit down here a moment." I spread my handkerchief on the dusty steps, and she sat down, smiling after her little outbreak.

Leaning over her, I took hold of her hand and lifted it to my breast, clasping it very tight.

"Look at me—" She had already looked in vague wonder, her eyes wide open, beginning the question which her lips were parting to frame. "Don't say that to me—that about your belief in me—unless you mean it all—all. I love you and I mean to succeed for you—with you. I mean to marry you—some day."

The look in her eyes changed, but for a second

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they did not leave my face. My eyes were holding them.

"Oh!—What?" she gasped, while her hand went up to her throat.

Then she firmly, but as I afterward recalled, slowly withdrew her hand from my grasp, which made no attempt to detain it.

"Are you crazy?" she gasped. And I truly believe she thought I was.

"Yes—no—I don't know. If I am, my insanity begins and ends only in you. I know only one thing—that I love you and that some day—some day, I am going to marry you, though the whole world and yourself oppose me."

She stood up.

"But, oh! why did you say that?"

"Because it is true."

"We were such good friends."

"We never were—I never was—for a moment."

"You were."

"Never."

"We were just beginning to understand each other, to be such good friends, and now you have ended it all."

"That cannot be ended which never had a beginning. I don't want your friendship; I want your love and I will have it."

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"No, I cannot. Oh! why did you? I must be going."

"Why? Sit down."

"No, I cannot. Good-by."

"Good-by."

She hesitated, and then without looking, held out her hand. "Good-by."

I took her hand and this time kissed it, as I remember, almost fiercely. She tried to stop me, but I held it firmly.

"You must not do that; you have no right." She was standing very straight now.

"I took the right."

"Promise me you will never say that again."

"What?"

"What you said at first."

"I don't know what you mean. I have been saying the same thing all the time—ever since I knew you—ever since I was born—that I love you."

"You must never say that again—promise me before I go."

"I promise you," I said slowly, "that I will say it as long as I live."

She appeared to let herself drift for a half second, then she gave a little catch at herself.

"No, really, you must not—I cannot allow you.

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I have no right to let you. I must go, and if you are a friend of mine, you will never——”

“Listen to me,” I interrupted firmly. “I have not asked you for anything; I have not asked your permission; I am not a friend of yours and I shall never be that. I don’t want to be your friend. I love you, and I am going to win your love. Now you can go. Come on.”

We walked on and I saw her safely home. We talked about everything and I told her much of myself. But she was plainly thinking not about what I was saying then but what I had said on the dusty steps. When we reached her home, I saved her embarrassment. I held out my hand and said, “Good-by, I love you.”

No woman can quite let a man go, at least, no woman with a woman’s coquetry can. After I had turned away, what must Eleanor Leigh do but say demurely, “I hope you will win your case.” I turned back, of course. “I will,” I said, “in both courts.” Then I strode away. I went home feeling somewhat as a man might who, after shipwreck, had reached an unknown shore. I was in a new land and knew not where I stood or how; or whether the issue would be life or death. I only knew that I had passed a crisis in my life and whatever came I must meet it.

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I was strangely happy, yet I had had no word of encouragement.

To have declared one's love has this in it, that henceforth the one you love can never be wholly indifferent to you. I went home feeling that I had acquired a new relation to Eleanor Leigh and that somehow I had a right to her whether she consented or not. My love for her, as ardent as it had been before, had suddenly deepened. It had, in a way, also become purer. I went over and over and dwelt on every word she had ever uttered to me, every gentle look I had ever seen her give, every tender expression that had illumined her face or softened her eyes, and I found myself thinking of her character as I had never done before. I planned how I should meet her next and tried to fancy how she would look and what she would say. I wondered vaguely what she would think of me when she reached her room and thought over what I had said. But I soon left this realm of vague conjecture for the clearly defined elysium of my own love. Had I known what I learned only a long time afterward—how she acted and what she thought of on reaching home, I might have been somewhat consoled, though still mystified.

XXVI

COLL McSHEEN'S METHODS

IT is astonishing what a motive power love is. With Eleanor Leigh in my heart, I went to work on my Tipps case with fury.

When I applied at the offices of the P. D. & B. D. and asked to be shown the books of the old company which had been reorganized and absorbed, I was met first by the polite assurance that there never was such a road as I mentioned, then that it had been wound up long ago and reorganized. Next, as I appeared somewhat firm, I was informed that the books had been burned up in a great fire, spoken of as Caleb Balderstone used to speak of the Ravenswood fire, as "the fire." This would have been an irremediable loss, but for the fact that I knew that there had been no fire since the reorganization of the company. I stated this fact with more positiveness than was usually employed in those offices and announced that unless those books were produced

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without further delay or misrepresentation, I would file a bill at once which would open the eyes of a number of persons. This procured for me an interview with an official of the vice-presidential rank—my first real advance. This proved to be my old acquaintance, Mr. Gillis, the agent of the Argand Estate. When I entered he wore an expression of sweet content as of a cat about to swallow a mouse. It was evident that he meant to have his revenge on me now. After stating my object in calling, with so much circumstantiality that there could be no mistake about it, I was informed by Mr. Gillis, briefly but firmly, that those books were not accessible, that they were “private property and not open to the public.”

Stillman Gillis was a wiry, clear-eyed, firm-mouthed, middle-sized man of about middle age as older men regard it. He had a pleasant address, perfect self-assurance, and a certain cool impudence in his manner which I have often observed in the high officials of large corporations. He had, I knew, been the private secretary and confidential man of Mr. David Argand.

“I am aware that the books are private property,” I said, “but it happens that I am myself one of the owners—I represent two very considerable owners of the stock of the old company.”

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He shook his head pleasantly. "That makes no difference."

I could not help thinking of the turnkey at the jail. It was insolence, but only of a different sort.

"You mean to say that it makes no difference whether or not I am a stockholder when I demand to see the books of the company in which I hold my interest?"

"Not the slightest," he admitted.

"I suppose you have consulted counsel as to this?"

"Oh! yes; but it was not necessary."

"Well! you have the books?"

"Oh! yes."

"Because some of your people told me that they had been burnt up in a fire."

"Did they tell you that?" he smilingly asked.

"They did that to save you trouble."

"Considerate in them."

"Of course, we have the books—in our vaults."

"Buried?" I hazarded.

He nodded. "Beyond the hope of resurrection." He took up his pen to show that the interview was ended; and I took up my hat.

"Do you mind telling me who your counsel is that you consulted in these matters? I might prevail on him to change his mind."

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"Oh! no. Mr. Collis McSheen is our counsel—one of them."

"Has he specifically given you this advice?"

"He has." He turned to his stenographer. "Take this letter."

"So—o." I reflected a moment and then tilted back my chair.

"Mr. Gillis—one moment more of your valuable time, and I will relieve you."

"Well?" He turned back to me with a sudden spark in his gray eye. "Really, I have no more time to give you."

"Just a moment. You are mistaken in thinking you are giving me time. I have been giving you time. The next time we meet, you will be a witness in court under subpoena and I will examine you."

"Examine me? As to what, pray?" His face had grown suddenly dark and his insolence had turned to anger.

"As to what you know of the fraud that was perpetrated on the heirs of a certain Colonel Tipps who built and once largely owned the road I have spoken of."

"Fraud, sir! What do you mean?"

"As to what you know—if anything—of the arrangement by which a certain Collis McSheen

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sold out his clients, the said heirs of the said Colonel Tipps, to a certain Mr. Argand, whose private secretary you then were; and whose retained counsel he then became."

"What!"

His affected coolness was all gone. His countenance was black with a storm of passion, where wonder, astonishment, rage, all played their part, and I thought I saw a trace of dismay as well.

"What do you mean, sir? What do I know of the—the fraud—the arrangements, if there ever were any such arrangements as those you speak of?"

I was the insolent one now. I bowed.

"That is what I am going to ask you to tell in court. You have the books, and you will bring them with you when you come, under a *subpœna duces tecum*. Good-day." I walked out.

As I approached my office, I saw Collis McSheen bolting out of the door and down the street, his face as black as a thunder-cloud. He was in such a hurry that he did not see me, though he nearly ran over me. He had evidently been summoned by telephone.

I was working on my bill a few days later when to my surprise Peck walked into my office. I knew instantly that there was mischief afoot.

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He looked unusually smug. He had just arrived that morning, he said. Mr. Poole had some important interests in a railway property which required looking after, and he had come on to see about them. There was not much to do, as the road was being capitally managed; but they thought best to have some one on the ground to keep an eye on the property, and remembering our old friendship, he had suggested that I be retained to represent Mr. Poole, if anything should at any time arise, and Mr. Poole had, of course, acted on his advice. Mr. Poole had, in fact, always been such a friend of mine, etc. The trouble with Peck was that he always played a trump even when it was not necessary.

I expressed my sense of obligation to both him and Mr. Poole, but in my heart could not help recalling the chances Mr. Poole had thrown away to help me in the past.

“What sort of interests are they?” I inquired.

“Railway interests. He has both stocks and bonds—second mortgage bonds. But they are as good as gold—pay dividends straight along. The railway has never failed to increase its net earnings every year for ten years, and is a very important link in a transcontinental line.”

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"What railway did you say it was?" I enquired, for I had observed that he had not mentioned the line.

"Oh! ah! the P. D. & B. D."

"Oh! Well, the fact is, Peck, I don't know that I could represent Mr. Poole in any litigation connected with that road."

"Oh! it is not litigation, my dear fellow. You'd as well talk about litigation over the Bank of England. It is to represent him as a sort of regular——"

"I know," I cut him short, "but I think there will be some litigation. The fact is, I have a claim against that road."

"A claim against the P. D. & B. D.! For damages, I suppose?"

"No. To upset the reorganization that took place——"

Peck burst out laughing. "To upset the reorganization of that road which took place ten—twenty—How many years ago was it? You'd better try to upset the government of the United States."

"Oh! No——"

"Come now. Don't be quixotic. I've come here to give you a good case that may be the beginning of a great practice for you. Why, you may become general counsel."

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"I thought Mr. McSheen was general counsel? You said so, I remember, when you were here before."

"Why, ah! yes. He is in a way. You would, of course, be—in a way, his—ah——"

"Peck," I said, and I kept my eye on him blandly. "Have you seen Mr. McSheen since your arrival?"

"Why, yes, I have. I had to see him, of course, because he is, as I told you, the general counsel——"

"In a way?" I interpolated.

"Yes. And of course I had to see him. It would not have been quite professional if I had not."

"And he assents to your proposition?"

"Oh! yes, entirely. In fact he——" He paused and then added, "is entirely satisfied. He says you are an excellent lawyer."

"Much obliged to him. I beat him in the only case I ever had against him."

"What was that?"

"Oh, a small case against the Argand Estate."

"Oh! Well now, Glave, don't be quixotic. Here is the chance of your life. All the big people—the Argand Estate, Mr. Leigh, Mr. McSheen, Mr. Canter. Why, it may lead you—no one can tell where!"

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"That is true," I said, quietly. Then quite as quietly I asked: "Did Mr. McSheen send for you to come on here?"

"Did Mr. McSheen send for me to come on here? Why, no. Of course he did not. I came on to look after Mr. Poole's interest."

"And to employ me to represent him?"

"Yes."

"And to give up my clients as McSheen did?"

"What!"

"Peck, tell Mr. McSheen that neither my dog nor myself is for sale."

"What! I—I don't understand," stammered Peck.

"Well, maybe so. But you give McSheen the message. He will understand it. And now I will explain it to you, so you may understand." I explained briefly to him my connection with the matter and my proposed line of action; and he naturally endeavored to satisfy me as to the absolute futility of such a course as I proposed.

"Why, consider," he said, "the people you will have to contend with—the idea that you can prove fraud against such persons as Mr. Leigh, the Argands, Mr. McSheen."

"I don't expect to prove fraud on Mr. Leigh," I quickly interposed.

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"You will have to sue him. He is a director."

"I know it. But he came in after the transaction was completed and I believe knew nothing about it, and he has left the directory. But why are you so interested in Mr. Leigh? His interests in the street-car lines are directly opposed to Mr. Poole's."

"I am not interested in Mr. Leigh, but in you. Why, do you imagine any judge in this city would even consider a bill charging fraud against such persons as those I have mentioned? For I tell you they will not. You will just make a lot of enemies and have your trouble for your pains."

"Perhaps so—but Peck, you have not mentioned all the people I shall have to sue."

"Who do you mean? I have only mentioned one or two."

"Mr. Poole."

Peck's countenance fell.

"Mr. Poole! What did he have to do with it?"

"He was one of them—one of those who engineered the reorganization—and swin—engineered the heirs of Colonel Tipps and some others out of their interest. Well, give my message to Mr. McSheen," I said, rising, for Peck's duplicity came over me like a wave. "You may understand it

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better now. Neither my dog nor I is for sale. Peck, you ought to know me better."

Peck left with that look on his face that used to annoy me so at college—something that I can best describe as a mechanical simper. It had no warmth in it and was the twilight between indifference and hate.

Peck evidently conveyed my message.

While I worked on my case, Mr. McSheen was not idle. Not long after, I was walking along a narrow, dark street on my way home from my office late one night when I was struck by Dix's conduct. It was very strange. Instead of trotting along zigzag, going from corner to corner and inspecting alleyways for chance cats to enliven life, as he usually did at night when the streets were fairly empty, he kept close at my heels, now and then actually rubbing against my knee as he walked, as he did in the crowded section when I took him along. And once or twice he stopped and, half turning his head, gave a low, deep growl, a sure signal of his rising anger. I turned and gazed around, but seeing no cause for his wrath, concluded that a dog was somewhere in the neighborhood, whom he detected though I could not see him. I was aware afterward that I had seen two men pass on the other side of the

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street and that they crossed over to my side near the corner ahead of me; but I took no notice of them. I had a pleasanter subject of thought as I strolled along. I was thinking of Eleanor Leigh and building air castles in which she was always the chatelaine.

Dix's low growl fell on my ear, but I paid no heed. The next second—it was always a little confused in my mind, the blow came so quickly—I was conscious of a man—or two men, springing from behind something just at my side and of Dix's launching himself at them with a burst of rage, and at the same moment, something happened to me—I did not know what. A myriad stars darted before my eyes and I felt a violent pain in my shoulder. I staggered and fell to my knees; but sprang up again under a feeling that I must help Dix, who seemed to have been seized by one of the men in his arms, a stout stumpy fellow, while the other was attempting to kill him with a bludgeon which he carried. I flung myself on the latter, and seizing him by the throat bore him back against the wall, when he suddenly twisted loose and took to his heels. Then I turned on the other who, I thought, was trying to carry Dix off. I found, however, that instead he was making a fight for his life. At the moment

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he dropped a pistol which he was drawing and I sprang for it and got it. Dix had leaped straight for his throat, and having made good his hold, had hung on and the man was already nearly strangled. "For God's sake, take him off! Kill him. I'm choking," he gasped as with weakening hands he tore at the dog's massive shoulders. "I'm choking." And at that moment he staggered, stumbled, and sank to his knees with a groan.

Fearing that he would be killed on the spot, though I was sick and dizzy from the blow, I seized Dix by the throat and with a strong wrench of his windpipe at the same time that I gave him an order, I broke his hold. And fortunately for the ruffian, his heavy coat collar had partially saved his throat.

The wretch staggered to his feet with an oath and supported himself against the wall while I pacified Dix, who was licking his chops, his hair still up on his back, his eyes still on his enemy.

"Are you hurt?" I asked, for, though still dizzy, the need to act had brought my senses back.

"What business is that of yours?" he demanded brutally. "Wait a minute. I'll kill that d——d dog."

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The reply to my enquiry was so brutal that my anger rose.

"You drunken beast! Say a word and I'll give you to him again and let him worry you like a rat. You see him! Keep back, Dix!" for the dog, recognizing my anger, had advanced a little and flattened himself to spring on the least provocation.

"I didn't mean no offence," the fellow growled. "But I don't like a d——d dog to be jumpin' at me."

"You don't! What did you mean by trying to murder me?"

"I didn't try to murder you."

"You did. I have no money—not a cent. I'm as poor as you are."

"I wa'n't after no money."

"What then? What had I ever done to you that you should be after me?"

"I wa'n't after you."

"You were. You tried to kill me. You've cut my head open and no thanks to you that you didn't kill me."

"'T wa'n't me. 'T was that other fellow, the skunk that runned away and left me."

"What's his name?"

"I don' know. I never seen him before."

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"What are you lying to me for? What's his name and why was he after me? Tell me and I'll let you go—otherwise I'll give you to the police."

"I'll tell you this—he's a friend of a man you know."

"Of a man I know? Who?"

"He's a big man, too."

"A big man! Do you mean— You don't mean Coll McSheen?"

"I didn't tell you, did I? You can swear to that. Now give me five dollars and let me go."

"I haven't any money at all, but I'll take you to a doctor and get your wound dressed. I have to go to one, too."

"I don't want no doctor—I'm all right."

"No, I won't give you up," I said, "if you'll tell me the truth. I'm not after you. If I'd wanted to give you up, I'd have fired this pistol and brought the police. Come on. But don't try to run off or I'll let you have it."

He came along, at first surlily enough; but presently he appeared to get in a better temper, at least with me, and turned his abuse on his pal for deserting him. He declared that he had not meant to do me any harm, in fact, that he had

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only met the other man accidentally and did not know what he was going to do, etc.

I was so fortunate as to find my friend Dr. Traumer at home, and he looked after the wound in the scoundrel's throat and then took a look at my hurt.

"You had a close graze," he said, "but I don't think it is anything more serious than a bad scrape on your head, and a laceration and bruise on the shoulder."

While he was working on the footpad I telephoned Langton, got hold of him, and asked him to come there, which he said he would do at once. Just as the doctor was through with me, Langton walked in. I never saw so surprised an expression on his face as that when his eyes fell on my thug. I saw at once that he knew him. But as usual he said nothing. The thug, too, evidently knew he was an officer; for he gave me one swift glance of fear. I, however, allayed his suspicion.

"It's all right," I said, "if you tell me the truth. Who is he?" I asked Langton. He smiled.

"Red Talman. What 've you been up to?" he asked.

"Nothin'."

"I brought him here to have his wound dressed, and he's going directly. I have promised him."

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He nodded.

"Coll McSheen put him on to a little job and he bungled it, that's all."

Langton actually looked pleased; but I could not tell whether it was because his warning had been verified or because I had escaped.

"'T was that other skunk," muttered Talman sullenly.

"Who? Dutch?"

The footpad coughed. "Don' know who 't was."

"You don't? You don't know who I am either?"

The man gave him a keen look of inspection, but he evidently did not know him. Langton leaned over and dropped his voice. "Did you ever know—?" I could not catch the name. But the thug's eyes popped and he turned white under his dirt.

"I didn't have nothin' 't all to do with it. I was in Canady," he faltered.

Langton's eyes suddenly snapped. "I know where you were. This gentleman's a friend of mine," he said. "He saved my life once, and if you ever touch him, I'll have you—" He made a gesture with his hand to his throat. "Understand? And not all the bosses in the city will save you. Understand?"

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"I ain't goin' to touch him. I got nothin' against him."

"You'd better not have," said Langton, implacably. "Come here." He took him out into the doctor's front office and talked to him for some little time while I told the doctor of my adventure.

"Who is Langton when he is at home?" I asked him.

He chuckled. "He is the best man for you to have in this city if Coll McSheen is your enemy. He is a retainer of Mr. Leigh's."

Just then Langton and the thug came in.

"Say, I'm sorry I took a hand in that job," said the latter. "But that skunk that runned away, he put 't up, and he said 's another friend of his got him to do it."

"Coll McSheen?"

"I don't know who 't was," he persisted.

I glanced at Langton, and he just nodded.

"Good-by. If ever you wants a job done——"

"Get out," said Langton.

"Don't you give 't to that other skunk. I didn't know. Good-by. Obligated to you." And he passed through the door which Langton held open for him.

"It's all right," said the latter as he closed the

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door. "You had a close graze—that's one of the worst criminals in the country. He don't generally bungle a job. But he's all right now. But there are others."

"My dog saved my life—he got his throat."

"That's a good dog. Better keep him close to you for a while."

XXVII

THE SHADOW

A GREAT factory with the machinery all working and revolving with absolute and rhythmic regularity and with the men all driven by one impulse and moving in unison as though a constituent part of the mighty machine, is one of the most inspiring examples of directed force that the world shows. I have rarely seen the face of a mechanic in the act of creation which was not fine, never one which was not earnest and impressive.

Such were the men, some hundreds of them, whom I used to gaze at and admire and envy through the open windows of several great factories and mills along the street through which lay my way to my office. I chose this street for the pleasure of seeing them of a morning, as with bared and brawny arms and chests and shining brows, eager and earnest and bold, they bent over glowing fires and flaming furnaces and rolled massive red-hot irons hither and yon, tossing them

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about, guiding them in their rush and swing and whirl, as though they were very sons of Vulcan, and ever with a catch of song or a jest, though a swerve of the fraction of an inch might mean death itself.

I had come to know some of them well, that is, as well as a man in a good coat can know men in a workman's blouse, and numbers of them I began to know in a sort, as day after day I fell in beside them on their way to or from their work; for, lawyer and gentleman as I was, they, I think, felt in me the universal touch of brotherhood. We used to talk together, and I found them human to the core and most intelligent. Wolfert was an idol among them. They looked to him as to a champion.

"He has learned," said one of them to me once, "the secret of getting at us. He takes us man for man and don't herd us like cattle. He speaks to me on a level, man to man, and don't patronize me."

He was a strong-visaged, clear-eyed Teuton with a foreign accent.

"We haf our own home," he said with pride, "and the building company is 'most off my back. If we can but keep at vork we'll soon be safe, and the young ones are all at school. The sun shines

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bright after the storm," he added with a shake of his strong head.

"Ah, well, we are having good times now. The sun is shining for many of us. Let us pray that it may keep shining."

"God grant it," he said, solemnly.

I was thinking of Miss Eleanor Leigh and the way she had smiled the last time Heaven had favored me with a sight of her. That was sunshine enough for me. She had heard of the attack on me and had been so sympathetic that I had almost courted her again on the spot. John Marvel had made me out quite a hero.

The good times, however, of which my mill-friends and I talked were rapidly passing. In Coll McSheen's offices plans were being laid which were to blot out the sun for many a poor family.

Within a day or two I began to observe in the press ominous notices of an approaching strike. All the signs, it was declared, pointed to it. Meetings were being held, and the men were rapidly getting out of hand of their conservative leaders, who, it being on the verge of winter, were averse to their undertaking the strike at this time, notwithstanding what they admitted were their undoubted and long-standing grievances. As I ran

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over the accounts in many of the papers I was surprised to find that among these "conservatives" was mentioned the name of Wringman. It was evident, however, that the efforts of the conservative element were meeting with success; for in the workingmen's section through which I passed every day there was not as yet the least sign of excitement of any kind, or, indeed, of any dissatisfaction. The railway men all appeared quiet and contented, and the force in the several large factories along my route whom I mingled with in my tramp back and forth from my office were not only free from moroseness, but were easy and happy. The only strikes going on in the city were those on the lines in which the Argand interests were, and they were frequently spoken of as "chronic."

The mills were all running as usual; work was going on; but a shadow was deepening over the community of the operatives. The strike which the newspapers had been prophesying for some time was decreed—not yet, indeed, by the proper authorities; but it was determined on by the leaders, and its shadow was darkening the entire section. The first knowledge I had of it was the gloom that appeared on the countenances of the men I saw in the morning. And when I met Wolffert he was more downcast than I had seen

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him in a long time. He had been working night and day to stave off the trouble.

"The poor fools!" was all he could say. "They are the victims of their ignorance."

From my earliest arrival in the city I had been aware of something about the laboring element—something connected with the Union, yet different from what I had been accustomed to elsewhere. I had ever been an advocate of the union of workmen to protect themselves against the tyranny and insolence of those who, possibly by fortuitous circumstances, were their employers. I had seen the evil of the uncurbed insolence added to the unlimited power of the boss to take on or to fling off whom he pleased and, while the occupation lasted, to give or reduce wages as he pleased. And I had seen the tyrannous exercise of this power—had seen men turned off for nothing but the whim of a superior; had seen them hacked about; ordered around as if they had been beasts of burden, and if they ever murmured, told to go elsewhere, as though a poor man with a family of children could "go elsewhere" at an hour's notice; hundreds of men, thousands of men "laid off," because, it was said, "times were dull," though the returns from their work in good times had made their employers rich beyond anything their fathers

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had ever dreamed of. And I had witnessed with that joy that a man feels in seeing justice meted out, the rise of a power able to exact, if not complete, at least, measurable justice for the down-trodden.

But here was something different. It was still the Union; but bore a new complexion and a different relation alike to the workingman, the employer, and the public. It was a strange power and its manifestation was different. It was not in active exercise when I first went among the workingmen. Yet it was ever present. A cloud appeared to hang over the population; there was a feeling that a volcano, as yet quiet, might burst forth at any time, and no man could tell what the end might be. It was ever in men's minds, not only the workingmen's, but the tradesmen's, the middlemen's. It appeared to keep on edge a keen antagonism between all laboring men as such and all other men. It was nearer and more important than politics or religion. It had entered into their lives and created a power which they feared and obeyed. To a considerable extent it had taken away their liberties, and their lives were regulated by their relation to it. I saw the growth of the system and was mystified by it, for I saw individuality and personal liberty passing away—

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men deliberately abandoning their most cherished privileges to submit to a yoke that was being put on them. I noted the decline of excellence in the individual's work and of ambition for excellence in himself—the decay of the standard of good workmanship. I marked the mere commercial question of wages—higher wages irrespective of better work—take the place of the old standard of improved workmanship, and witnessed the commercialism which in large figures had swept over the employer class, now creep over and engulf the laboring class to the destruction of all fine ambition and the reduction of excellence to a dead level of indifferent mediocrity. They deliberately surrendered individual liberty and all its possibilities and became the bondmen of a tyrannous dictator which they set up.

I was familiar with the loafer and the shirker. He is incident to humanity. He exists in every calling and rank of life. But it was novel to me to find an entire class deliberately loafing and shirking and slurring on principle. I saw gangs of workmen waiting around, shivering in the wind, for the hour to come when they might take up the tools which lay at hand with which they might have warmed themselves. I saw them, on the stroke, drop those tools as though the wave of

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sound had paralyzed their arms. I saw them leave the stone half set, the rivet half driven, the bar half turned; the work, whatever it was, half done. I saw bright, alert, intelligent men, whose bodies were twice and their brains ten times as active as their fellows', do double work in the same time as the latter, and then dawdle and loaf and yawn empty-handed beside the unfinished work with which they might readily have doubled their income. I asked some of my friends why it was and the answer was always the same: "the Union."

A strike was going on on the other side of the town, but the direct results were not yet felt among us, and as the enterprises there where the trouble existed were in conflict with those on our side, and therefore our rivals, it did not appear likely that we should be affected except possibly to our advantage. The population of our section, therefore, looked on and discussed the troubles with the placid satisfaction of men who, secure on land, discuss and commiserate those tossed by storms far off, whose existence is known only by the long surges that with spent force roll against their shore. They enjoyed their own good fortune, rejoiced in the good times, and to a considerable extent spent their earnings like children, almost indifferent as to the future.

XXVIII

THE WALKING DELEGATE

MISS ELEANOR LEIGH had observed for some time that her father was more than usually grave and preoccupied. She knew the cause, for her father discussed many matters with her. It was often his way of clarifying his own views. And when he asked her what she thought of them she felt that it was the highest compliment she ever received—not that he took her advice, she knew, but this did not matter; he had consulted her. The fact gave her a self-reliance wholly different from mere conceit. It steadied her and furnished her a certain atmosphere of calm in which she formed her judgment in other matters. Of late, in the shadow of the clash with his operatives, which appeared to be growing more and more imminent, he had not advised with her as formerly and the girl felt it. Was it due to the views which she had been expressing of late touching the suppression of the laboring class? She knew that her father held views as to this quite the opposite of those she had been vaguely

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groping toward, and while he treated her views with amused indulgence he considered the whole line of thought as the project of selfish demagogues, or, at best, of crack-brained doctrinaires. It might suit for the millennium, but not for a society in which every man was competing with every other man. In fact, however, the principal reason for Mr. Leigh's silence was the growing differences between himself and Mrs. Argand. The struggle had grown until it involved the very existence of his house. He knew that if his daughter ever realized the truth, that her aunt's interest had been thrown against him and in favor of men whose methods he reprobated, it would mean the end of all between them, and he was unwilling that a breach should come between his daughter and her mother's sister.

The status of the present relation with his men was, however, growing steadily worse and more threatening. The influences at work were more and more apparent. The press was giving more and more space to the widening breach, and the danger of a strike on a vast scale that should exceed anything ever known heretofore was steadily increasing.

Eleanor knew that this was the cloud that left its shadow on her father's brow and she deter-

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mined to make an effort to assist him. She had revolved the scheme in her little head and it appeared the very thing to do.

The approach of Thanksgiving offered an opportunity for an act of good-will which she felt sure would bear fruit. She had talked it over with John Marvel and he had glowed at the suggestion. So one day at the table she broke in on her father's reverie.

"Father, how many men have you in the mills and on the railway?"

Her father smiled as he nearly always did when she spoke to him, as, indeed, most people smiled, with sheer content over the silvery voice and sparkling eyes.

"Why, roughly, in the mills about eleven hundred—there may be a few more or a few less to-day; to-morrow there will not be one."

"Oh! I hope they won't do that. I have such a beautiful plan."

"What is it? To give them all they demand, and have them come back with a fresh and more insolent demand to-morrow?"

"No, to give them—every one who has a family, a Thanksgiving basket—a turkey."

Her father burst out laughing. "A turkey? Better give them a goose. What put that idea

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into your little head? Why, they would laugh at you if they did not fling it back in your face."

"Oh! no, they would not. I never saw any one who did not respond to kindness."

"Better wait till after to-morrow and you will save a lot of turkeys."

"No, I am serious. I have been thinking of it for quite a while and I have some money of my own."

"You'd better keep it. You may come to need it."

"No, I want to try my plan. You do not forbid it?"

"Oh, no! If you can avert the strike that they are preparing for, your money will be a good investment."

"I don't do it as an investment," protested the girl. "I do it as an act of kindness."

"All right, have your way. It can't do any harm. If you succeed, I shall be quite willing to foot the bills."

"No, this is my treat," said the girl, "though I shall put your name in too."

So, that day Miss Eleanor Leigh spent inspecting and getting prices on turkeys, and by night she had placed her order with a reliable man who had promised to provide the necessary number of

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baskets, and, what is more, had gotten interested in her plan. She had enlisted also the interest of John Marvel, who worked like a Trojan in furtherance of her wishes. And I, having learned from John of her charitable design, gave my assistance with what I fear was a less unselfish philanthropy. Happily, disease is not the only thing that is contagious. It was impossible to work shoulder to shoulder with those two and not catch something of John Marvel's spirit, not to mention the sweet contagion of Eleanor Leigh's charming enthusiasm. I learned much in that association of her cleverness and sound sterling sense as she organized her force and set them to work. And I was fortunate enough to get one of her charming smiles. It was when she said, "I want one of the best baskets for Mrs. Kenneth McNeil," and I replied, "I have already sent it." Thus, in due time, on the day before Thanksgiving Day, a score of wagons were busily at work carrying not only the turkeys ordered by Miss Leigh, as a Thanksgiving present for each family in her father's employ, but with each one a basket of other things.

It happened that that night a great meeting of the operatives was held.

It was largely attended, for though the object had not been stated in the call, it was well known

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that it was to consider a momentous subject; nothing less than an ultimatum on the part of the men to the company, and this many of the men felt was the same thing with a strike. The name of David Wringman, the chief speaker, was a guaranty of this. He was a man who had forged his way to the front by sheer force, mainly sheer brute force. From a common laborer he had risen to be one of the recognized leaders in what had come to be known as the workingmen's movement. He had little or no education, and was not known to have technical training of any kind. Some said he had been a machinist; some a miner; some a carpenter. His past was, in fact, veiled in mystery. No one knew, indeed, where he came from. Some said he was Irish; some that he was Welsh; some that he was American. All that was known of him positively was that he was a man of force, with a gift of fluent speech and fierce invective, which rose at times and under certain conditions to eloquence. At least, he could sway an assemblage of workingmen, and, at need, he was not backward in using his fists, or any other weapon that came to hand. Speaking of Wringman, Wolffert once said that not the least of the misfortunes of the poor was the leaders they were forced to follow. His reputation for brute strength

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was quite equal to his reputation as a speaker, and stories were freely told of how, when opposition was too strong for him in a given meeting, he had come down from the platform and beaten his opponents into submission with his brawny fists. It was rumored how he had, more than once, even waylaid his rivals and done them up, but this story was generally told in undertones; for Wringman was now too potent and dangerous a man for most men of his class to offend personally without good cause. His presence in the city was in itself a sign that some action would be taken, for he had of late come to be known as an advanced promoter of aggressive action. To this bold radicalism was due much of his power. He was "not afraid of the capitalists," men said. And so they established him in his seat as their leader. To his presence was due a goodly share of the shadow that had been gathering over the workingmen's part of the section of the town which I have noted.

Thus, the meeting on the evening I speak of was largely attended. For an hour before the time set for it the large hall in the second story of a big building was crowded, and many who could not get in were thronging the stairways and the street outside. A reek of strong tobacco per-

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vaded the air and men with sullen brows talked in undertones, broken now and then by a contentious discussion in some group in which possibly some other stimulant than tobacco played a part.

Wolffert and Marvel had both been trying to avert the strike, and had, I heard, made some impression among the people. Marvel had worked hard all day aiding Miss Leigh in her friendly efforts, and Wolffert had been arguing on rational grounds against a strike at the beginning of winter. I had been talking over matters with some of my mill-friends who had invited me to go with them; so I attended the meeting. I had been struck for some time with the change that had been going on in the workingmen's districts. As wretched as they had been before they were now infinitely more so.

The meeting began, as the meetings of such bodies usually begin, with considerable discussion and appearance of deliberation. There was manifest much discontent and also much opposition to taking any steps that would lead to a final breach. A number of men boldly stood forth to declare for the half-a-loaf-better-than-no-bread theory, and against much hooting they stood their ground. The question of a resolution of

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thanks for Miss Leigh's baskets aroused a little opposition, but the majority were manifestly for it, and many pleasant things were said about her and her father as well, his liberal policy being strongly contrasted with the niggard policy of the other roads. Then there appeared the real leader of the occasion, to hear whom the meeting had been called: Wringman. And within ten minutes he had everything his own way. He was greeted with cheers as he entered, and he shouldered his way to the front with a grim look on his face that had often prepared the way for him. He was undoubtedly a man of power, physical and mental. Flinging off his heavy overcoat, he scarcely waited for the brief introduction, undertaken by the chairman of the occasion, and, refusing to wait for the cheers to subside, he plunged at once into the midst of his subject.

"Workingmen, why am I here? Because, like you, I am a workingman." He stretched out his long arm and swept it in a half circle and they cheered his gesture and voice and violent action, though had they considered, as they might well have done, he had not "hit a lick" with his hands in a number of years. Unless, indeed, a rumor which had begun to go the rounds was true, that he had once at least performed work for the gov-

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ernment in an institution where the labor was not wholly voluntary.

Then came a catalogue of their grievances and wrongs, presented with much force and marked dramatic ability, and on the heels of it a tirade against all employers and capitalists, and especially against their employer, whom he pictured as their arch enemy and oppressor, the chief and final act of whose infamy he declared to be his "attempt to bribe them with baskets of rotten fowls." Who was this man? He would tell them. He held in his hand a paper which pictured him in his true character. Here he opened a journal and read from the article I had written for *Kalender* the infamous head-lines of the editor which changed the whole. This was the man with whom they had to deal—a man who flung scraps from his table for famishing children to wrangle over with dogs. There was but one way to meet such insolence, he declared, to fling them back in his face and make him understand that they didn't want favors from him, but justice; not rotten fowls, but their own hard-earned money. "And now," he cried, "I put the motion to send every basket back with this message and to demand an increase of twenty-five per cent. pay forthwith. Thus, we shall show them and

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all the world that we are independent American workmen earning our own bread and asking no man's meat. Let all who favor this rise and the scabs sit still."

It was so quickly and shrewdly done that a large part of the assembly were on their feet in a second; indeed, many of them were already standing, and the protest of the objectors was lost in the wild storm of applause. Over on the far side I saw little McNeil shouting and gesticulating in vehement protest; but as I caught sight of him a dozen men piled on him and pulled him down, hammering him into silence. The man's power and boldness had accomplished what his reasoning could never have effected.

The shouts that went up showed how completely he had won. I was thrown into a sort of maze. But his next words recalled me. It was necessary, he went on, that he should still maintain his old position. His heart bled every moment; but he would sacrifice himself for them, and if need were, he would die with them; and when this time came he would lead them through flaming streets and over broken plutocrats to the universal community of everything. He drew a picture of the rapine that was to follow, which surpassed everything I had ever believed possible. When he sat down,

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his audience was a mob of lunatics. Insensible to the folly of the step I took, I sprang to my chair and began to protest. They hushed down for a second. I denounced Wringman as a scoundrel, a spy, a hound. With a roar they set upon me and swept me from my feet. Why I was not killed instantly I hardly know to this day. Fortunately, their very fury impeded them. I knew that it was necessary to keep my feet, and I fought like a demon. I could hear Wringman's voice high above the uproar harking them on. Suddenly a cry of "Put him out" was raised close beside me. A pistol was brandished before my face; my assailants fell back a little, and I was seized and hustled to the door. I found a man I had noticed near me in the back part of the hall, who had sat with his coat collar turned up and his hat on, to be my principal ejector. With one hand he pushed me toward the entrance whilst, brandishing his revolver with the other, he defended me from the blows that were again aimed at me. But all the time he cursed me violently.

"Not in here; let him go outside. Leave him to me—I'll settle him!" he shouted—and the crowd shouted also. So he bundled me to the door and followed me out, pushing others back and jerking the door to after him.

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On the outside I turned on him. I had been badly battered and my blood was up. I was not afraid of one man, even with a pistol. As I sprang for him, however, he began to put up his weapon, chuckled, and dropped his voice.

“Hold on—you’ve had a close call—get away from here.”

It was Langton, the detective. He followed me down the steps and out to the street, and then joined me.

“Well?” he laughed, “what do you think of your friends?”

“That I have been a fool.”

He smiled with deep satisfaction. “What were you doing in there?” I asked.

“Looking after my friends. But I don’t feel it necessary to invite them to cut my throat. One good turn deserves another,” he proceeded. “You keep away from there or you’ll find yourself in a bad way. That Wringman——”

“Is a scoundrel.”

“Keep a lookout for him. He’s after you and he has powerful friends. Good-night. I don’t forget a man who has done me a kindness— And I know that fellow.”

He turned into a by-street.

The next morning the papers contained an ac-

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count of the proceedings with glaring head-lines, the account in *The Trumpet* being the fullest and most sympathetic and giving a picture of the "great labor leader, Wringman, the idol of the workingman," who had, by "his courage and character, his loftiness of purpose and singleness of aim, inspired them with courage to rise against the oppression of the grinding corporation which, after oppressing them for years, had attempted by a trick to delude them into an abandonment of the measures to secure, at least, partial justice, just as they were about to wring it from its reluctant hand."

It was a description which might have fitted an apostle of righteousness. But what sent my heart down into my boots was the republication of the inserted portion of my article on the delayed train attacking Mr. Leigh. The action of the meeting was stated to be unanimous, and in proof it was mentioned that the only man who opposed it, a young man evidently under the influence of liquor, was promptly flung out. I knew that I was destined to hear more of that confounded article, and I began to cast about as to how I should get around it. Should I go to Eleanor Leigh and make a clean breast of it, or should I leave it to occasion to determine the

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matter? I finally did the natural thing—I put off the decision.

Miss Eleanor Leigh, who had worked hard all the day before despatching baskets to the hundreds of homes which her kind heart had prompted her to fill with cheer, came down to breakfast that morning with her heart full of gratitude and kindness toward all the world. She found her father sitting in his place with the newspapers lying beside him in some disorder and with a curious smile on his face. She divined at once that something had happened.

“What is it?” she asked, a little frightened.

For answer Mr. Leigh pushed a paper over to her and her eye fell on the head-lines:

HONEST LABORING MEN RESENT BRAZEN
ATTEMPT AT BRIBERY
LABOR LEADER'S GREAT APPEAL FOR JUSTICE
LABOR DEMANDS ITS DUES

“Oh, father!” With a gasp she burst into tears and threw herself in her father's arms.

“That is the work of Canter and his partner, McSheen,” said Mr. Leigh grimly.

It was not the only house in which the sending back of her baskets caused tears. In many a poor

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little tenement there was sore weeping because of the order—in not a few a turkey had not been known for years. Yet mainly the order was obeyed.

Next day Mr. Leigh received in his office a notification that a deputation of the operatives on his road demanded to see him immediately. He knew that they were coming; but he had not expected them quite so soon. However, he was quite prepared for them and they were immediately admitted. They were a deputation of five men, two of them elderly men, one hardly more than a youth, the other two of middle age. At their head was a large, surly man with a new black hat and a new overcoat. He was the first man to enter the room and was manifestly the leader of the party. Mr. Leigh invited them to take seats and the two older men sat down. Two of the others shuffled a little in their places and turned their eyes on their leader.

“Well, what can I do for you?” enquired Mr. Leigh quietly. His good-humored face had suddenly taken on a cold, self-contained expression, as of a man who had passed the worst.

Again there was a slight shuffle on the part of the others and one of the older men, rising from his seat and taking a step forward, said gravely: “We have come to submit to you——”

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His speech, however, was instantly interrupted by the large man in the overcoat. "Not by a d——d sight!" he began. "We have come to demand two things——"

Mr. Leigh nodded.

"Only two? What may they be, please?"

"First, that you discharge a man named Kenneth McNeil, who is a non-union man——"

Mr. Leigh's eyes contracted slightly.

"——and secondly, that you give a raise of wages of fifteen per cent. to every man in your employ——and every woman, too."

"And what is the alternative, pray?"

"A strike."

"By whom?"

"By every soul in your employ, and, if necessary, by every man and woman who works in this city——and if that is not enough, by a tie-up that will paralyze you, and all like you."

Mr. Leigh nodded. "I understand."

A slight spark came into his eyes and his lips tightened just a shade, but when he spoke his voice was level and almost impersonal.

"Will nothing less satisfy you?" he enquired.

"Not a cent," said the leader and two of the others looked at him with admiration. "We want justice."

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Mr. Leigh, with his eye steadily on him, shook his head and a smile came into his eyes. "No, you don't want justice," he said to the leader, "you want money."

"Yes, our money."

Again Mr. Leigh shook his head slowly with his eyes on him. "No, not your money—mine. Who are you?" he demanded. "Are you one of the employees of this road?"

"My name is Wringman and I am the head of this delegation."

"Are you an employee of this company?"

"I am the head of this delegation, the representative of the Associated Unions of this city, of which the Union on this road constitutes a part."

"I will not deal with you," said Mr. Leigh, "but I will deal with you," he turned to the other men. "I will not discharge the man you speak of. He is an exceptionally good man. I happen to know this of my own personal knowledge, and I know the reason he is not a Union man. It is because you kept him out of the Union, hoping to destroy him as you have destroyed other honest men who have opposed you." He turned back to the leader.

Wringman started to speak, but Mr. Leigh cut him short.

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“Not a word from you. I am dealing now with my own men. I know you. I know who your employer is and what you have been paid. You sold out your people in the East whom you pretended to represent, and now you have come to sell out these poor people here, on whose ignorance and innocence you trade and fatten. You have been against McNeil because he denounced you in the East. Your demand is preposterous,” he said, turning to the others. “It is an absolute violation of the agreement which you entered into with me not three months ago. I have that agreement here on my desk. You know what that says, that the scale adopted was to stand for so long, and if by any chance any question should arise, it was to be arbitrated by the tribunal assented to by yourselves and myself. I am willing to submit to that tribunal the question whether any question has arisen, and if it has, to submit it for adjudication by them.”

“We did not come here to be put off with any such hyp—” began the leader, but before he had gotten his word out, Mr. Leigh was on his feet.

“Stop,” he said. And his voice had the sharp crack of a rifle shot. “Not a word from you. Out of this office.” He pointed to the door and at the same moment touched the bell. “Show

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that man the door," he said, "instantly, and never admit him inside of it again."

"Ah, I'm going," sneered Wringman, putting on his hat, "but not because you ordered me."

"Yes, you are—because I ordered you, and if you don't go instantly I will kick you out personally."

He stepped around the desk and, with his eyes blazing, walked quickly across the floor, but Wringman had backed out of the door.

"For the rest of you," he said, "you have my answer. I warn you that if you strike you will close the factories that now give employment to thousands of men and young women. You men may be able to take care of yourselves; but you should think of those girls. Who will take care of them when they are turned out on the street? I have done it heretofore—unless you are prepared to do it now, you had better consider. Go down to my box-factory and walk through it and see them, self-supporting and self-respecting. Do you know what will become of them if they are turned out? Go to Gallagin's Gallery and see. Go back to your work if you are men of sense. If not, I have nothing further to say to you."

They walked out and Mr. Leigh shut the door behind them. When he took his seat a deep

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gravity had settled on him which made him look older by years.

The following day an order for a general strike on the lines operated by Mr. Leigh was issued, and the next morning after that not a wheel turned on his lines or in his factories. It was imagined and reported as only a question of wages between an employer and his men. But deep down underneath lay the secret motives of McSheen and Canter and their set who had been plotting in secret, weaving their webs in the dark—gambling in the lives of men and sad-eyed women and hungry children. The effect on the population of that section of the city was curious. Of all sad things on earth a strike is the saddest. And like other battles, next to a defeat the saddest scene is the field of victory.

The shadow had settled down on us; the sunshine was gone. The temper of every one appeared to have been strained. The principle of Unionism as a system of protection and defence had suddenly taken form as a system of aggression and active hostility. Class feeling suddenly sprang up in open and armed array, and next came division within classes. The talk was all of force; the feeling all one of enmity and strife. The entire population appeared infected by it. Houses were

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divided against themselves; neighbors who had lived in friendliness and hourly intercourse and exchanged continual acts of kindness, discussed, contended, quarrelled, threatened, and fought or passed by on the other side scowling and embittered. Sweetness gave place to rancor and good-will to hate.

Among those affected by the strike was the family of my old drummer. The change was as apparent in this little home, where hitherto peace and content had reigned supreme with music to fill in the intervals and make joy, as in the immediate field of the strike.

The whole atmosphere of happiness underwent a change, as though a deadly damp had crept in from the outside, mildewing with its baleful presence all within, and turning the very sunlight into gloom. Elsa had lost her place. The box-factory was closed. The house was filled with contention. The musicians who came around to smoke their big pipes and drink beer with old Loewen were like the rest, infected. Nothing appeared to please any longer. The director was a tyrant; the first violin a charlatan; the rest of the performers mostly fools or worse; and the whole orchestra "a fake."

This was the talk I heard in the home when I stopped by sometimes of an evening on my way to

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my room, and found some of his friends arguing with him over their steins and pipes, and urging a stand against the director and a demand that he accede to their wishes. The old drummer himself stood out stoutly. The director had always been kind to him and to them, he insisted. He was a good man and took pride in the orchestra, as much pride as he himself did. But I could see that he was growing soured. He drank more beer and practised less. Moreover, he talked more of money, which once he had scarcely ever mentioned. But the atmosphere was telling; the mildew was appearing. And in this haunt of peace, peace was gone.

I learned from Loewen one evening that in the event of the strike not being settled soon, there was a chance of a sympathetic strike of all trades, and that even the musicians might join in it, for they had "grievances also."

"But I thought music was not a trade, but a profession, an art?" I said, quoting a phrase I had overheard him use. He raised his shoulders and threw out his hands, palm upward.

"Ach! it vas vonce."

"Then why is it not now?"

"Ach! Who knows? Because they vill not haf it so. Ze music iss dead—ze harmony iss all

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gone—in ze people—in ze heart! Zere iss no more music in ze souls of ze people. It iss monee—monee—monee—fight, fight, fight, all ze time! Who can gife ze divine strain ven ze heart is set on monee always?”

Who, indeed? I thought, and the more I thought of it the more clearly I felt that he had touched the central truth.

XXIX

MY CONFESSION

IT is said that every woman has in her nature something feline. I will not venture on so sweeping an assertion; but I will say that one of the sex was never excelled by any feline in her ability to torture and her willingness to tease the victim of her charms.

When I met Eleanor Leigh next after the memorable session on the dusty steps, I could not tell for my life what were her feelings toward me. They were as completely veiled as though she had been accustomed from her infancy to enfold herself in impenetrable mystery. There was a subtle change in her manner profoundly interesting to me, but what it denoted I could not in the least discover, and every effort on my part to do so was frustrated with consummate art. She did not look at me and at moments appeared oblivious of my presence. She talked more than ever before of John Marvel, varied at times by admiring allusions to Leo Wolffert, until I almost began to

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hate them both. And all the while, she was so exasperatingly natural and innocent. A man may be a true friend to another, ready to serve him to the limit and may wish him all the happiness in the world, and yet may not desire the girl who has become his sun, moon, and stars to appear to draw her light from his source. So, presently, like any other worm, I turned.

“You appear to think that there is no one else in the world like John Marvel!” I said, fuming inwardly.

“I do not. In a way, he stands by himself. Why, I thought you thought so too?”

“Yes, of course—I do—I mean—I believe you are in—” I hesitated to finish the sentence, and changed it. “I believe you think more of him than of any one else.” I did not really believe this—I wished her to deny it; but not she! I was playing at a game at which she was an expert from her cradle. A subtle change of expression passed over her face. She gave me a half glance, and then looked down. She appeared to be reflecting, and as my eyes rested on her I became conscious of the same feeling of pleased wonder with which we gaze into a perfectly clear fountain whose crystal depths we may penetrate, but not fathom.

“Yes, I think I do, in a way—I think him—

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quite wonderful. He appears to me the embodiment of truth—rugged and without grace—but so restful—so real—so sincere. I feel that if any great convulsion of nature should occur and everything should be overthrown, as soon as we emerged we should find Mr. Marvel there unchanged—like Truth itself, unchangeable. If ever I marry, it will be to some man like that—simple and strong and direct always—a rock.” She gazed placidly down while this arrow quivered in my heart. I wanted to say, “Why, then, don’t you marry him?” But we were already too perilously near the edge for me to push matters further in that direction. I wished also to say, “Why don’t you marry me?” but I was not conscious at the moment of any remarkable resemblance to a rock of strength.

I recall her exact appearance as she waited. She happened to be arrayed that afternoon in a dark red dress, which fitted perfectly her slim, supple form, and her hat with a dark feather, and her dark hair about her brow gave her an air which reminded me of a red rose. It is not, however, the tint that makes the rose, but the rose itself. The rose is a rose, whether its petals be red or pink or white. And such she ever appeared to me. And the thorns that I found about her

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in no way detracted from her charms. Though I might have wished her less prone to show them, I did not find her pursuit the less delicious.

Just after this I decided to move my quarters. Pushkin was beginning to come again to the old drummer's house, I did not know why—and though I did not meet him I could not bear to be under the same roof with him. I began to feel, too, the change in the household. Elsa had begun to change somehow. Instead of the little carols and snatches like bird-songs that I used to hear before she went to her work, or in the evening when she returned, there was silence and sometimes sighs, and in place of smiles, gloom. Her face lost its bloom. I wondered what the poor thing was distressing herself about. My young Swede, too, whom I still occasionally saw, appeared to have lost that breezy freshness and glow which always reminded me of country meadows and upland hay-fields, and looked downcast and moody. In place of his good-humored smile, his ruddy face began to wear a glowering, sullen look; and finally he disappeared. The mother, also, changed, and her voice, formerly so cheery and pleasant, had a sharper tone than I had ever heard in it before, and even the old drummer wore a cloudier air, wholly different from his old-time

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cheeriness. In fact, the whole house had changed from the nest of content that it had been, and I began to plan moving to a better neighborhood, which my improving practice appeared to justify. The chief thing that withheld me was that radiant glimpse of Miss Leigh which I sometimes got of a morning as she came tripping along the street with her little basket in her hand, and her face sweet with high thoughts. It set me up all day; attended me to my office, and filled it with sunshine and hope. Moreover, I was beginning to find in my association with John Marvel a certain something which I felt I should miss. He calmed me and gave me resolution. It appeared strange that one whom I had always looked down on should so affect me, but I could no longer hide it from myself. But against this reason for remaining I set the improvement in my condition that a better lodging-place would indicate. After a time, my broad-shouldered young Swedish car-driver came back and I was glad I had remained. Several times in the evening I found him in the house dressed up with shiny hair, a very bright necktie, and a black coat, the picture of embarrassed happiness, and Elsa sitting up and looking prim and, I fancied, a trifle bored, though it might have been only demureness. When I heard her

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singing again, I assumed that it was the latter expression, and not the former, which I had observed. However, I came in one night and heard Pushkin's voice in the house and I was again at sea. Elsa in all the gayety of her best frock and ribbons, dashed by me as I mounted the stair to my room.

The next evening I was walking home late. I came on two persons standing in the shadow in a secluded spot. They stopped talking as I passed and I thought I heard my name whispered. I turned and they were Elsa and Pushkin. What was he doing talking with her at that hour? I came near walking up and denouncing him then and there; but I reflected and went on, and when, a few minutes later, Elsa came in very red and scared-looking, I congratulated myself on my self-restraint and sagacity. The next morning was rainy and black, and I took a street-car, and found that the motorman was my blue-eyed young Swede, and that he was as dark and cloudy that morning as the day.

That night, I heard Pushkin's voice in the house again, and my old friend's reply to him in a tone of expostulation. It was hard not to hear what Pushkin said, for the house was like a sounding-board. Pushkin was actually trying to borrow

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money—"more money," and he gave as his reason the absolute certainty that with this stake—"just this one loan," he should win an heiress—"One of the richest women in all the land," he said. He urged as a reason why the old fellow should lend it to him, that they were both from the same country, and that his grandfather, when a minister of the court, had appreciated Loewen's music and helped him to get his first place.

"And he was a shentlemans like me, and you nodings but a common trummer, hey? And—look here," he said, "I am going to marry a great heiress, and then I shall not haf to borrow any more. I shall haf all de moneys I want—my pockets full, and den I vill pay you one—two—t'ree times for all you haf lend me, hein? And now I, de shentlemans, comes to you, de common trummer, and calls you mine friend, and swear to pay you one—two—t'ree times over, certainlee you vill nod refuse me?"

The rest was in the language of their own country. The argument had its effect; for I could hear the old drummer's tone growing more and more acquiescent and the other's laugh becoming more and more assured, and finally I knew by his voice that he had succeeded.

I came near rising on the spot and going in and

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unmasking him. But I did not. I determined to wait until the next morning.

Next morning, however, when I came down I received notice that my room was no longer for rent. The announcement came to me from Mrs. Loewen, who gave it in her husband's name, and appeared somewhat embarrassed. I could not see her husband. He had gone out "to meet a gentleman," she said. Her manner was so changed that I was offended, and contented myself with saying I would leave immediately; and I did so, only leaving a line addressed to my old drummer to explain my departure—I was sure that their action was in some way due to Pushkin. In fact, I was not sorry to leave, though I did not like being put out. My only cause of regret was that I should miss my walk through the street where the young school-mistress was shining. I am not sure whether it was a high motive or a mean one which made me, as I left the house, say to Mrs. Loewen:

"You are harboring a scoundrel in that man Pushkin. Keep your eyes open." I saw a startled look in her eyes, but I did not wait to explain.

I did not feel comfortable that evening as I walked through the streets to the better quarters

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which I had taken. I knew that John Marvel would have said less or more. I half made up my mind to go to John and lay the matter before him. Indeed, I actually determined to do so. Other things, however, soon engrossed my thoughts and my time. I had to file my bill for my old ladies. And so this, like most of my good intentions, faded away.

In fact, about this time I was so wholly taken up with my love for the entrancing ideal that I had clad in the lineaments of Miss Eleanor Leigh and adorned with her radiance and charm that I had no thought for anything that was not in some way related to her. My work was suddenly uplifted by becoming a means to bring me nearer to my ambition to win her. My reading took on new meaning in storing my mind with lore or equipping it to fit it for her service; the outward form of nature displayed new beauty because she loved it. The inward realm of reflection took on new grace because she pervaded it. In a word, the whole world became but the home and enshrinement of one being, about whom breathed all the radiance and sweetness that I found in it. All of which meant simply that I was truly in love. Content with my love, I lived in a heaven whose charm she created. But Love has its winter

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and it often follows close on its spring. I had played Fate again and waylaid her one afternoon as she was returning home from an excursion somewhere, and persuaded her to prolong her walk with an ease that lifted me quite out of myself, and I began to have aspirations to be very brave and good. I wished to be more like a rock, rugged and simple.

We were walking slowly and had reached a park, and I guilefully led her by a roundabout path through a part where the shrubbery made it more secluded than the rest. I can see the spot now as then I saw it: a curving gray road sloping down under overhanging trees, and a path dappled with sunlight dipping into masses of shrubbery with a thrush glancing through them, like a little brown sprite playing hide-and-seek. As we neared a seat, I suggested that we should sit down and I was pleased at the way in which she yielded; quite as if she had thought of it herself. It was almost the first time that I had her quite to myself in fair surroundings where we were face to face in body and soul. I felt, somehow, as though I had made a great step up to a new and a higher level. We had reached together a new resting-place, a higher atmosphere; almost a new land. And the surroundings were fresh to me in

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the city, for we had strayed out of the beaten track. I remember that a placid pool, shaded by drooping willows and one great sycamore, lay at our feet, on which a couple of half-domesticated wild-fowl floated, their graceful forms reflected in the mirror below them. I pointed to one and said, "Alcyone," and my heart warmed when she smiled and said, "Yes, at peace. 'The past unsighed for, and the future sure.'"

A quotation from a poet always pleases me. It is as if one found a fresh rose in the street, and where it comes from the lips and heart of a girl it is as though she had uttered a rose.

"Are you fond of Wordsworth?" I asked. "He seems to me very spiritual."

"Yes. In fact, I think I am fond of all poetry. It lifts me up out of the grosser atmosphere of the world—which I enjoy, too, tremendously—and seems to place me above and outside of myself. Some, even, that I don't understand. I seem to be borne on wings that I can't see into a rarer atmosphere that I can only feel, but not describe."

"That," I said, "as I understand it, is the province of poetry—and also, perhaps, its test."

"It has somewhat the same effect on me that saying my prayers has. I believe in something

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infinitely good and pure and blessed. It soothes me. I get into a better frame of mind."

"I should think your frame of mind was always 'a better frame,'" I said, edging toward the personal compliment and yet feeling as though I were endangering a beautiful dream.

"Oh! you don't know how worse I can be—how angry—how savage."

"Terribly so, I should think. You look like an ogress."

"I feel like one sometimes, too," she nodded. "I can be one when I have the provocation."

"As—for example?"

"Well, let me see?—Well,—for example, once—oh! quite a time ago—it was just after I met you—the very next day"—(My heart bounded that she could remember the very next day after meeting me—and should set dates by that important event. I wanted to say, that is the beginning of my era; but I feared)—"I got into a dreadful passion—I was really ferocious."

"Terrible," I jested. "I suppose you would have poisoned your slaves, like the old Roman empress— What was her name?"

"I was angry enough."

"And, instead, you gave the cat milk in place of cream, or did some such awful act of cruelty."

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"Not at all. I did nothing. I only burned inwardly and consumed myself."

"And pray, what was the offence that called forth such wrath, and who was the wretch who committed the crime?"

"I had sufficient provocation."

"Of course."

"No, I mean really——"

"What?"

"Why, it was a piece that appeared in one of the morning papers, a vile scurrilous sheet that had always attacked my father covertly; but this was the first open attack, and it was simply a huge lie. And it has been repeated again and again. Why, only the other day the same paper republished it with huge head-lines and charged that my father was the cause of all the trouble in the city—my father, who is the best, the kindest, the most charitable man I ever knew—who has almost beggared himself trying to furnish facilities to the poor! Oh, I can't bear it! I wish I had that man under my heel this minute! I would just grind him to powder! I would!" She turned, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks glowing with fervor, her face rigid with resolution, her white teeth shut together as if they were a trap to hold her enemy till death. "Give the cat

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milk! I could have poured molten metal down that man's throat—cheerfully—yes, cheerfully.”

It may be well believed that as she proceeded, the amusement died out of my face and mind. I turned the other way to keep her from seeing the change that must have come over me. I was thinking hard and I thought quickly, as, 'tis said, a drowning man thinks. Life and death both flashed before me—life in her presence, in the sunlight of those last weeks, and the shadow of perpetual banishment. But one thing was certain. I must act and at once. I turned to her and was almost driven from my determination by the smile in her eyes, the April sunlight after the brief storm. But I seized myself and took the leap.

“I wrote that piece.”

She actually laughed.

“Yes, I know you did.”

“I did—seriously, I wrote it; but——”

I saw the horror oversweep her face. It blanched suddenly, like the pallor on a pool when a swift cloud covers the sun, and her hand went up to her bosom with a sudden gesture as of pain.

“Oh!” she gasped. The next second she sprang up and sped away like a frightened deer.

I sprang up to follow her, to make my explanation to her; but though, after the first twenty

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steps, she stopped running and came down to a walk, it was still a rapid walk, and she was fleeing from me. I felt as though the gates of Paradise were closing on me. I followed her at a distance to see that she reached home safely, and with a vain hope that she might slacken her gait and so give me an excuse to make such explanation as I could. She, however, kept on, and soon after she passed beyond the park I saw a trap draw up beside the pavement, and, after a moment in which the driver was talking to her, a young man sprang out and, throwing the reins to a groom, joined her and walked on with her. In the light of the street lamp I recognized young Canter. I turned back cursing him; but most of all, cursing myself.

It has been well observed that there is no more valuable asset which a young man can possess than a broken heart. In the ensuing weeks I bore about with me if not a broken, at least a very much bruised and wounded one. It is a tragic fact in the course of mortality that a slip of a girl should have the power to shut the gates of happiness on a man. There were times when I rebelled against myself at being as big a fool as I knew myself to be, and endeavored to console myself by reverting to those wise bits of philosophy

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which our friends are always offering to us in our distress from their vantage-ground of serene indifference. There were doubtless as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, but I was not after fishing—somehow I could not get a grasp on the idea that there were as lovely and attractive girls in the world whom I was likely to meet as Eleanor Leigh, whom I now felt I had lost and might possibly never recover.

I walked the streets for some time that evening in a very low state of mind, and Dix, as he trudged solemnly along with his head now against my leg, now a step in the rear, must have wondered what had befallen me. By midnight he looked as dejected as I felt. Even when at length, having formulated my letter, I took him out for a run, he did not cheer up as he usually did. That dog was very near a human being. He sometimes appeared to know just what went on in my mind. He looked so confoundedly sorry for me that night that I found it a real consolation. He had the heart of a woman and the eyes of an angel. The letter I wrote was one of the best pieces of advocacy I ever did. I set forth the facts simply and yet clearly and, I felt, strongly. I told the plain truth about the paper, and I had the sense not to truckle, even while I expressed my regret

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that my work had been made the basis of the unauthorized and outrageous attack on her father and the lie about herself. With regard to the rights of the public and the arrogance of the class that ran the railways and other quasi-public corporations, I stood to my guns.

This letter I mailed and awaited, with what patience I could command, her reply. Several days passed before I received any reply, and then I got a short, little cool note saying that she was glad to see that I felt an apology was due to her honored father, and was happy to know that I was not the author of the outrageous head-lines. It was an icy little reply to a letter in which I had put my whole heart and I was in a rage over it. I made up my mind that I would show her that I was not to be treated so. If this was the way in which she received a gentleman's full and frank *amende*, why, I would have no more to do with her. Anger is a masterful passion. So long as it holds sway no other inmate of the mind can enter. So long as I was angry I got on very well. I enjoyed the society of my friends and was much gayer to outward appearances than usual. I spent my evenings with Marvel and Wolffert or some of my less intimate companions, treated myself and them to the theatre, and made alto-

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gether a brave feint at bravery. But my anger died out. I was deeply in love and I fell back into a slough of despond. I thought often of confiding in John Marvel; but for some reason I could not bring myself to do so.

Adam driven suddenly out of Paradise with Eve left behind to the temptation of the serpent will give some idea of what I felt. I had the consolation of knowing that I had done the right thing and the only thing a gentleman could have done; but it was a poor consolation when I looked back on the happiness I had been having of late in the presence of Eleanor Leigh. And now between her and me was the flaming sword which turned every way.

My heart gave a sudden drop into my boots one evening when I came across an item in the society columns of an afternoon paper, stating that it was believed by the friends of the parties that Mr. Canter would, before very long, lead to the altar one of the reigning belles of the city. I had always disliked "Society Columns," as the expression of a latter-day vulgarity. Since then I have detested them.

I finally determined to try to get an interview with her whose absence clouded my world, and wrote her a note rather demanding one. As I

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received no reply to this, I called one evening to see her, if possible. The servant took in my card and a moment later returned with the statement that Miss Leigh was not at home. I was sure that it was not true. I came down the steps white with rage and also with a sinking of the heart. For I felt that it was all over between us.

Those whom the gods hate they first make mad, and it was by no accident that the passion of anger and the state of madness have come to be known by the same terms in our tongue. I have always held since then that every true lover has something of madness in him while the passion rages. I could cheerfully have stormed her house and carried Eleanor Leigh away. I recalled with grim envy William the Conqueror's savage wooing when he met the count's daughter who had insulted him and rode her down, to receive soon afterward her full submission. This somewhat barbarous form of proving one's passion having passed out of vogue, I testified my spleen by falling into a state of general cynicism which I vented so generously that Wolffert finally asked me what had happened to me, and conjectured that I must have met with a cross in love. This recalled me sufficiently to myself to make me dissemble my feelings, at least when in his presence. But I was

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certainly not rational for some time, and, sleeping or waking, I was haunted by the voice of the siren to whom I had fatally listened. What must I do in my folly the next time I met Miss Leigh, which I did quite accidentally one day on the street, but carry my head so high and bow so slightly that the next time we met, which was far from being as accidental as it might have appeared, she carried her head very high and did not bow at all. It was at some sort of a fair held for charity—and ever since then I have hated them. Feeling assured that Eleanor Leigh would go, I attended myself with no more charitable object than to benefit a very wretched young lawyer, who was deeply conscious that he had made a fool of himself the last time he saw her. When I arrived, she was nowhere to be seen, and I was on the point of leaving when, turning, I found her standing in the midst of a group, her arms full of flowers, which she was selling. All I have to say is that since that time I have felt that Pluto was entirely justified in that little affair in the Sicilian meadows. Thinking to make the *amende* for my foolish airiness when I last saw her, I made my way up to Miss Eleanor Leigh; but as I approached and was in the very act of speaking to her she turned her back on me. It was a dead cut—a

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public insult, as humiliating as she could make it. I left the fair in a rage which lasted long. As I wandered through the forlorn streets that night I fed my heart on instances of woman's inconstancy, and agreed with the royal lover that, "Mal habil qui s'y fie." But it was a poor occupation and brought me little consolation. In his "Inferno," Dante has given twelve different and successive circles in the depths of perdition, each lower than the other. I passed through every one of them, and with no companion but my own folly.

XXX

SEEKING ONE THAT WAS LOST

ONE may not hate his personal enemy; but one should hate an enemy to mankind. Had I known what fresh cause I had to hate Pushkin, I should not have been so supine.

Since I began to work seriously my practice had increased, and I was so interested in working on my old ladies' case that I was often detained at my office until late at night; and several times on my way home I observed a man acting somewhat curiously. He would keep along behind me, and if I turned back, would turn up a by-street or alley. He was a big, brawny fellow, and I never saw him except at night. At first, it had made no impression on me; but at length, I noticed him so often that it suddenly struck me that he was following me. Rendered suspicious by my former experience, I began quietly to test him, and was having a very interesting time leading him around the town, when unexpectedly I discovered who he was. It was a singular feeling

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to find oneself shadowed; to discover that the man who has passed all others indifferently in the crowd has singled you out and follows you, bound to you by some invisible thread, tracking you through the labyrinth of the thoroughfares; disregarding all the thousands who pass with their manifold interests and affairs, and that, singling you out with no known reason, he sticks to you through all the mazes of the multitudes. It comes to you gradually, dawning by degrees; then bursts on you suddenly with a light that astonishes and amazes. You are startled, frightened, incredulous; then you suspect, test, and are convinced; you suddenly spring from obscurity and indifference into an object of interest to yourself; and then it becomes an intellectual game between hunter and hunted. New powers awaken, dormant since the days when man lived in the forest.

When I awoke to the fact that the big man I had noticed was following me, for a moment the sensation was anything but pleasant. My hair almost stirred on my head. The next moment anger took the place of this feeling—indignation that one should dare to shadow me, to spy on my actions. I determined to confront the spy and thwart him. It was not difficult to do; he was an awkward fellow. The game was easier than I had

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supposed. One night when I had observed him following me, waiting until I reached a favorable spot, I turned quickly with my hand on my pistol, which I had put in my pocket, and faced him under a street lamp, stepping immediately in front of him and blocking his way.

“Otto!”

With a growl he pulled his hat down closer over his brow and, stepping aside, passed on. I went home in a maze. Why should he follow me? I had not long to wait before I was enlightened.

One evening shortly afterward I was about to leave my office when there was a heavy step outside the door, and without a knock the door flew open and the old drummer entered. He looked so haggard and broken that I was on my feet in a second.

“What is the matter?” I gasped. “Is any one dead?”

“Vorser! Elsa?—Vere iss Elsa?” He stood before me like a wounded bison at bay, his eyes red with passion.

“Elsa! What!—‘Where is she?’ Tell me——?”

“Fhat haf you done vit my daughter?”

“Your daughter! What do you mean?” I asked quietly. “I have not seen her since I left your house. Tell me what has occurred.”

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He soon saw that I knew nothing of her, and his face changed. Yet he hesitated.

“Ze count said—” He began hesitatingly and stopped, thinking over something in his mind.

It all came to me in a second. That scoundrel! It was all accounted for now—the change in the family toward me—the notice to leave—the spying of Otto. Count Pushkin had used me as a blind to cover his own wickedness. I suddenly burst out into a wrath which opened the old drummer’s eyes. What I said of Pushkin cannot be repeated. What I proceeded to do was wiser. Why had I not pitched him out of the window that first evening, and so have ended his wicked career! I felt as if I were the cause of my friend’s wretchedness; of Elsa’s destruction. I sat the old fellow down in a chair, and made him tell me all the facts.

He informed me that for some time past he and her mother had noticed that Elsa had not been the same to Otto, and Otto had been unhappy and had thrown up his place; then she had wished to break with him; but they would not let her. And of late she had been staying out a good deal, visiting her friends, she said, and when they urged her to marry Otto, she had always begged off, and Otto was wretched, and they were all

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wretched. Count Pushkin had intimated that she was in love with me, and that I was the cause of her action. They could not believe it.

“Yet, ze count—?” The old fellow was not able to go on. I relieved him and he took up the thread elsewhere, and told of Otto’s following me to find out. And two or three nights before there had been trouble; she had come in late, and her mother had scolded her, and insisted on knowing where she had been, and she had told her a lie—and they had insisted on her carrying out her agreement with Otto, to which she assented. And this morning she was missing.

The old fellow broke down again. His grief was almost more for Otto than for himself. “He iss a good boy; he iss a good boy,” he repeated again and again.

“Maybe we were too harsh with her, sir, and now she may be dead.” He was overcome with grief.

I did not believe she was dead; but I feared for her a worse fate. He still did not suspect Pushkin. The count was his friend, he said; he had known him since his boyhood.

“I will find her,” I said. And I knew I should if I had to choke the truth out of Pushkin’s throat.

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"If you do, I vill bless you, and her mother vill, too!"

I told him to go home and console her mother.

"She has gone to see the preacher. He will know how to console her—and he will help her also."

"Why do you not go to the police?"

"Oh! Ze police! Ze police! Efery one say 'Ze police!' Ze police vill nod do notings for me. I ham nod von Union-man. Zay haf zeir orders. Ven I hax ze police zay say, 'Don't vorry, Elsa vill come home by-m-by, ven she get readee.'"

I had heard the same thing said about the police, and recalled what I had heard McSheen say to Wringman about keeping them from interfering. But I felt that they were probably right in their views about Elsa.

I had recourse to my detective again, and gave him all the information I possessed.

"Oh! We'll find out where she is," he said, with that inscrutably placid look on his face which I had learned was the veil under which he masked both his feelings and his purposes. "You can tell her father she isn't dead." This in answer to the old man's suggestion that she had been murdered, which I had repeated. Then he added, "But there are worse things than death."

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His eyes glistened and he buttoned up his coat in a way he had when there was any sharp work on hand. It always reminded me of a duellist. In a few days he had a clew to the lost girl, and justified my suspicions.

It was as I feared. Pushkin had inveigled her from her home and had taken her to a house which, if not precisely what I apprehended, was not less vile. It was one of those doubly disreputable places which, while professing to be reasonably respectable, is really more dangerous than the vilest den. The girl was possibly not actually at the place now, but had been there. Getting some suspicion of the place, she had insisted on leaving, but the woman of the house, said Langton, knew where she was.

"She is a hard one to handle. She has protection."

"Of the police?"

"Of those who control the police. She has powerful friends."

"I don't care how powerful they are, I will get that girl," I said.

I hesitated what to do. I had not wholly abandoned hope of making up my trouble with Eleanor Leigh. I did not wish my name to be mixed up in a scandal which probably would get into the

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papers. I determined to consult John Marvel, and I said so to Langton.

"You mean the preacher? Won't do any harm. He's straight. He's helping to hunt for her, too. I saw him just after I located her, and he had already heard."

I determined to go and see him, and told Langton to keep on following up his clew. When I went to Marvel's house, however, he was not at home. He had been away all day, since early morning, the girl who opened the door told me. I went to the police station. Marvel had been there and made a complaint about a house, and they were going to send a man around to investigate.

He was a terrible crank, that preacher was, but all the same he was a good sort of a fellow, the officer said. Some people thought he was too meddlesome and mixed up too much with affairs that did not concern him, but for his part, he had seen him do things and go where it took a man to go. As the officer was going in a short while, I determined to accompany him, so waited an hour or so till he was detailed, and then set out. When we arrived the place, for all outward signs of evil, might have been a home for retired Sunday-school teachers—a more decent and respectable little

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hotel in a quiet street could not have been found in town. Only the large woman, with heightened complexion, Mrs. Snow, who, at length, appeared in answer to the summons of the solemn officer, seemed to be excited and almost agitated. She was divided between outraged modesty and righteous indignation. The former was exhibited rather toward me, the latter toward the officer. But this was all. She swore by all the Evangelists that she knew nothing of the girl, and with yet more vehemence that she would have justice for this outrage. She would "report the officer to the captain and to his honor the mayor, and have the whole —th precinct fired." The officer was very apologetic. All we learned was that, "A lady had been brought there by a gentleman who said he was her husband, but she had refused to let her in. She did not take in people she did not know." As there was nothing to incriminate her, we left with apologies.

The strongest ally a man can enlist in any cause is a clear-headed, warm-hearted woman. In all moral causes they form the golden guard of the forces that carry them through. John Marvel's absence when I called to consult him was due to his having got on the trace of Elsa. Another of my friends had also got on her trace, and while I

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was hesitating and thinking of my reputation, they were acting. As soon as he learned of Elsa's disappearance he consulted the wisest counsellor he knew. He went, with rare good sense, to Eleanor Leigh. He had a further reason for going to her than merely to secure her aid. He had heard my name connected with the affair, and old John had gone to set me straight with her. He did not know of the trouble at the Charity Fair, and Miss Leigh did not enlighten him. Miss Eleanor Leigh, having learned through Marvel that the Loewens were in great trouble, as soon as her school was out that day, went to the Loewens' house to learn what she could of the girl, with a view to rendering all the aid she could. A new force had been aroused in her by John Marvel. Precisely what she learned I never knew, but it was enough, with what she had gleaned elsewhere, to lead to action. What she had learned elsewhere pointed to a certain place in town as one where she might secure further information. It was not a very reputable place—in fact, it was a very disreputable place—part saloon, part dance-hall, part everything else that it ought not to have been. It was one of the vilest dens in this city of Confusion, and the more vile because its depths were screened beneath a mass of gilding

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and tinsel and glitter. It lay on one of the most populous streets and, dazzling with electric lights, furnished one of the showiest places on that street. It was known as "The Gallery," an euphemism to cover a line of glaring nude figures hung on the walls, which, by an arrangement of mirrors, were multiplied indefinitely. Its ostensible owner was the same Mr. Mick Raffity who kept the semi-respectable saloon opening on the alley at the back of the building where I had my office. Its keeper was a friend of Mr. Raffity's, by the name of Gallagin, a thin, middle-aged person with one eye, but that an eye like a gimlet, a face impervious to every expression save that which it habitually wore: a mixture of cunning and ferocity.

The place was crowded from a reasonable hour in the evening till an unreasonable hour in the morning, and many a robbery and not a few darker crimes were said to have been planned, and some perpetrated, around its marble tables.

At the side, in a narrow street, was a private entrance and stairway leading to the upper stories, over the door of which was the sign, "Ladies' Entrance." And at the rear was what was termed by Mr. Gallagin, a "Private Hotel."

Young women thronged the lower floor at all

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hours of the night, but no woman had ever gone in there and not come out a shade worse, if possible, than when she entered. The Salvation Army had attempted the closing of this gilded Augean Stable, but had retired baffled. Now and then a sporadic effort had been made in the press to close or reform it, but all such attempts had failed. The place was "protected." The police never found anything amiss there, or, if they did, were promptly found to have something amiss with their own record. To outward appearance it was on occasions of inspection as decorous as a meeting-house. It was shown that the place had been offered for Sunday afternoon services, and that such services had actually been held there. In fact, a Scripture-text hung on the wall on such occasions, while close at hand hung the more secular notice that "No excuse whatever would be taken if one lady or gentleman took another lady's or gentleman's hat or wrap."

This gilded saloon on the evening of the day I called on John Marvel was, if anything, more crowded than usual, and into it just as it was beginning to grow gay and the clouds of cigarette and cigar smoke were beginning to turn the upper atmosphere to a dull gray; just as the earlier hum of voices was giving place to the shrieking laughter

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and high screaming of half-sodden youths of both sexes, walked a young woman. She was simply dressed in a street costume, but there was that about her trim figure, erect carriage, and grave face which marked her as different from the gaudy sisterhood who frequented that resort of sin, and as she passed up through the long room she instantly attracted attention.

The wild laughter subsided, the shrieks died down, and as if by a common impulse necks were craned to watch the newcomer, and the conversation about the tables suddenly hushed to a murmur, except where it was broken by the outbreak of some half-drunken youth.

"Who is she? What is she?" were questions asked at all tables, along with many other questions and answers, alike unprintable and incredible. The general opinion expressed was that she was a new and important addition to the soiled sisterhood, probably from some other city or some country town, and comments were freely bandied about as to her future destination and success. Among the throng, seated at one of the tables, was a large man with two bedizened young women drinking the champagne he was freely offering and tossing off himself, and the women stopped teasing him about his diamond

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ring, and rallied him on his attention to the new-comer, as with head up, lips compressed, eyes straight before her, and the color mounting in her cheek, she passed swiftly up the room between the tables and made her way to the magnificent bar behind which Mr. Gallagin presided, with his one eye ever boring into the scene before him. Walking up to the bar the stranger at once addressed Mr. Gallagin.

"Are you the proprietor here?"

"Some folks says so. What can I do for yer?"

"I have come to ask if there is not a young woman here—?" She hesitated a moment, as the barkeepers all had their eyes on her and a number of youths had come forward from the tables and were beginning to draw about her. Mr. Gallagin filled in the pause.

"Quite a number, but not one too many. In fact, there is just one vacancy, and I think you are the very peach to fill it." His discolored teeth gleamed for a second at the murmur of approval which came from the men who had drawn up to the bar.

"I came to ask," repeated the girl quietly, "if there is not a young woman here named Elsa Loewen."

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The proprietor's one eye fixed itself on her with an imperturbable gaze. "Well, I don't know as there is," he drawled. "You see, there is a good many young women here, and I guess they have a good many names among 'em. But may I ask you what you want with her?"

"I want to get her and take her back to her home."

Mr. Gallagin's eye never moved from her face.

"Well, you can look around and see for yourself," he said quietly.

"No, I don't think she would be here, but have you not a sort of a hotel attached to your place?"

"Oh! Yes," drawled Mr. Gallagin. "I can furnish you a room, if you have any friends—and if you haven't a friend, I might furnish you one or two of them."

"No, I do not wish a room."

"Oh!" ejaculated the proprietor.

"I wish to see Elsa Loewen, and I have heard that she is here."

"Oh! you have, and who may be your informant?" demanded the barkeeper, coldly. "I'd like to know what gentleman has sufficient interest in me to make me the subject of his conversation."

"I cannot give you my informant, but I have

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information that she is here, and I appeal to you to let me see her."

"To me? You appeal to me?" Mr. Gallagin put his hand on his thin chest and nodded toward himself.

"Yes, for her mother; her father. She is a good girl. She is their only daughter. They are distracted over her—disappearance. If you only knew how terrible it is for a young girl like that to be lured away from home where every one loves her, to be deceived, betrayed, dragged down while——"

The earnestness of her tone more than the words she uttered, and the strangeness of her appeal in that place, had impressed every one within reach of her voice, and quite a throng of men and women had left the tables and pressed forward listening to the conversation, and for the most part listening in silence, the expression on their faces being divided between wonder, sympathy, and expectancy, and a low murmur began to be audible among the women, hardened as they were. Mr. Gallagin felt that it was a crucial moment in his business. Suddenly from under the fur came the fierce claw and made a dig to strike deep.

"To hell with you, you d——d ——! I know you and your d——d sort—I know what you

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want, and you'll get it in one minute. Out of my place, or I'll pitch you in the gutter or into a worse hole yet!" He made a gesture with one hand such as a cat makes with its claws out.

A big man with a hard gleam in his eye moved along the edge of the bar, his face stolid and his eyes on the newcomer, while the throng fell back suddenly and left the girl standing alone with a little space about her, her face pale and her mouth drawn close under the unexpected assault. In another second she would, without doubt, have been thrown out of the place, or possibly borne off to that worse fate with which she had been threatened. But from the throng to her side stepped out a short, broad-shouldered man with a sodden face.

"Speak her soft, Galley, —— —— you! You know who she is! That is the Angel of the Lost Children. Speak her soft or —— —— you! you'll have to throw me out, too." The sodden face took on suddenly a resolution that gave the rough a look of power, the broad shoulders were those of an athlete, and the steady eye was that of a man to be reckoned with—and such was "Red Talman" when aroused.

The name he had given was repeated over the throng by many, doubtless, who had not heard of

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her, but there were others who knew, and told of the work that Eleanor Leigh had been doing in quarters where any other woman of her class and kind had never showed her face; of help here and there; a hand lent to lift a fallen girl; of succor in some form or another when all hope appeared to be gone.

It was a strange champion who had suddenly stepped forward into the arena to protect her, but the girl felt immediately that she was safe. She turned to her champion.

"I thank you," she said simply. "If you wish to help me, help me get hold of this poor girl whom I have come for. Ask him to let me see her, if only for one moment, and I may save her a life of misery."

The man turned to the proprietor. "Why don't you let her see the girl?" he said.

Gallagin scowled at him or winked, it could scarcely be told which. "What the —— is it to you? Why can't you keep your mouth for your own business instead of interfering with other folk? You have seen trouble enough doing that before."

"Let her see the girl."

"What business is it of yours whether I do or not?"



“Speak her soft, Galley.”

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“Just this—that when I was away and my wife was starvin’, and you never givin’ her nothin’, and my little gal was dyin’, this here lady came there and took care of ’em—and that’s what makes it my business. I don’t forgit one as helped me, and you know it.”

“Well, I’ll tell you this, there ain’t no gal of that name here. I don’t know what she’s talkin’ about.”

“Oh! Come off! Let her see the gal.”

“You go up there and look for yourself,” said the proprietor. “Take her with you if you want to and keep her there.”

“Shut your mouth, d——n you!” said Talman. He turned to Miss Leigh.

“She ain’t here, lady. He’d never let me go up there if she was there. But I’ll help you find her if you’ll tell me about her. You can go home now. I’ll see you safe.”

“I am not afraid,” said the girl. “My carriage is not far off,” and with a pleasant bow and a word of renewed supplication to the proprietor, whose eye was resting on her with a curious, malign expression, she turned and passed back through the room, with her gaze straight ahead of her, while every eye in the room was fastened on her; and just behind her walked the squatty figure of Red

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Talman. A few doors off a carriage waited, and as she reached the door she turned and gave him the name of the girl she was seeking, with a little account of the circumstances of her disappearance and of her reason for thinking she might be at Gallagin's place. She held out her hand to the man behind her.

"I don't know your name or what you alluded to, but if I can ever help any of your friends I shall be very glad to do what I can for them."

"My name's Talman. You've already done me a turn."

"'Talman!' 'Red—'! Are you the father of my little girl?"

"That's me."

"What I said just now I mean. If you want help, let me know, or go and see Mr. Marvel, the preacher, on the West Side—you know him—and you will get it. And if you can find anything of that poor girl I shall be eternally grateful to you. Good-night."

"Good-night, ma'am."

The man watched the carriage until it had disappeared around the corner and then he returned to the saloon. He walked up to the bar, and Gallagin advanced to meet him.

"If you are lyin' to me," he said, "you better

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not let me know, but you better git that gal out of your place and into her home, or the first thing you know there will be a sign on that door."

The other gave a snarl.

"I am puttin' you wise," said Talman. "There's trouble brewing. That's big folks lookin' for her."

"I guess Coll McSheen is somethin' in this town still. But for him you wouldn' be walkin' around."

"But for—! He's a has-been," said Talman. "He's shot his bolt."

"You ought to know," sneered Gallagin.

"I do."

"That the reason you take no more jobs?"

"It's a good one."

"Have a drink," said Gallagin, with a sudden change of manner, and he did him the honor to lift a bottle and put it on the bar.

"I ain't drinkin'. I've got work to do."

"Who's your new owner?"

"Never mind, he's a man. Send the gal home or you'll be pulled before twenty-four hours."

"You're runnin' a Sunday-school, ain't you?"

"No, but I'm done workin' for some folks. That's all. So long. Git her out of your house if she's here. Git her out of your house."

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He walked down the room, and as he passed a table the big man with the two women accosted him.

"Who's your friend?" he asked with a sneer. It was Wringman, who having finished his labors for the day in proving to famished strikers how much better off they were than formerly, was now refreshing himself in one of his favorite haunts, at his favorite occupation.

Talman stopped and looked at him quietly, then he said: "That man up there"—with his thumb over his shoulder he pointed toward the bar—"that man there has been a friend of mine in the past, and he can ask me questions that I don't allow folks like you to ask me. See? I have known a man to git his neck broke by buttin' too hard into other folks' business. See?"

Wringman, with an oath, started to get out of his chair, but his companions held him down, imploring him to be quiet, and the next moment the big bouncer from the bar was standing beside the table, and after a word with him Talman made his way through the crowd and walked out of the door.

The bar-keeper beckoned to his bouncer and the two held a muttered conference at the end of the

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bar. "He's gittin' too big for his breeches," said the bar-keeper as he turned away. "He'll git back there if he fools with me and pretty quick too."

XXXI

JOHN MARVEL'S RAID

HAD any one of the many detectives who were engaged in all sorts of work, legitimate and otherwise, in the limits of that great city, been watching among the half-sodden group of loafers and night-walkers who straggled through the side street on which opened the "Ladies' Entrance" of Mr. Gallagin's establishment along toward the morning hours, he might have seen a young woman brought from the door of the "Ladies' Entrance," supported by two persons, one a man and one a woman, and bodily lifted into a disreputable-looking hack of the type known as a "night-hawk," while the dingy passers-by laughed among themselves and discussed how much it had taken to get the young woman as drunk as that. But there was no detective or other officer on that street at that hour, and but for the fact that a short, squatty man, nursing a grievance against an old pal of his, and turning over in his mind the unexpected kindness of a

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young woman and a threadbare preacher in an hour when all the rest of the world—even his pals in iniquity—appeared to have turned against him, was walking through the street with a dim idea of beginning a quarrel with the man who had deserted him, the destination of the drunken woman might never have been known. Red Talman's heart, however, callous as it was, foul with crimes too many and black to catalogue, had one single spot into which any light or feeling could penetrate. This was the secret corner sacred to the thought of his one child, a little girl who alone of all the world truly thought him a good man. For John Marvel, who had helped his wife and child when he lay in prison under long sentence, and had been kind to him, he entertained a kindly feeling, but for the young lady who had taken his little girl and taught her and made her happy when the taunts of other children drove her from the public school, he had more than a liking. She and John Marvel alone had treated him in late years as a man and a friend, and a dim hope began to dawn in his mind that possibly he might yet be able to save his girl from the shame of ever truly knowing what he had been.

So, when the man, with his hat over his eyes, who had helped put the young woman in the ear-

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riage, re-entered the house and the drunken woman was driven off with her companion, Red Talman, after a moment of indecision, turned and followed the cab. He was not able to keep up with it, as, though the broken-kneed horses went at a slow gait, they soon outdistanced him, for he had to be on the watch for officers; but he knew the vehicle, and from the direction it took he suspected its destination. He turned and went back toward Gallagin's. When he reached the narrow, ill-lighted street, on which the side entrance opened, he slipped into the shadow at a corner and waited. An hour later the hack returned, a woman got out of it and, after a short altercation with the driver, ran across the pavement and entered the door. As the hack turned, Red Talman slipped out of the shadow and walked up to the front wheel.

"Which way you goin'?" he asked the driver, who recognized him.

"Home," he said.

"Gimme a ride?"

"Git up." He mounted beside him and drove with him to a dirty saloon in a small street at some little distance, where he treated him and let him go. A half-hour afterward he rang the bell of the family hotel which I had visited with an

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officer the day before, and asked to see the woman of the house. She could not be seen, the woman said who opened the door.

"Well, give her this message, then. Tell her that Galley says to take good care of the girl that he just sent around here and to keep her dark."

"Which one?" demanded the woman.

"The one as was doped, that come in the hack."

"All right."

"That's all," said Talman, and walked off.

The self-constituted detective pondered as he passed down through the dark street. How should he use his information? Hate, gratitude, and the need for money all contended in his breast. He had long harbored a feeling of revenge against McSheen and Raffity and his understrapper, Gallagin. They had deserted him in his hour of need and he had come near being hanged for doing their work. Only his fear of McSheen's power had kept him quiet. The desire for revenge and the feeling of gratitude worked together. But how should he use his knowledge? It behooved him to be prudent. Coll McSheen and Mick Raffity and Mel Gallagin were powerful forces in the world in which he moved. They could land him behind the bars in an hour if they worked together. At last he solved it!

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He would go to the man who had always been kind to him and his. Thus it was, that just before light that morning John Marvel was awakened by a knock on his door. A man was below who said a sick person needed his services. When he came down into the street in the dim light of the dawning day, there was a man waiting in the shadow. He did not recognize him at first, but he recalled him as the man told the object of his visit at such an hour, and John was soon wide-awake. Still he could scarcely believe the story he was told.

"Why, she can't be there," he protested. "A friend of mine was there to look for her day before yesterday with the police, and she was not there."

"She is there now, and if you pull the place you'll get her all right," asserted the other.

"I'll go there myself."

"No use goin' by yourself."

"I'll get the police——"

"The police!" The other laughed derisively. "They don't go after the Big Chief's friends—not when he stands by 'em."

"The 'Big Chief'?"

"Coll McSheen."

"Mr. McSheen!"

"He's *it*!"

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"It? What? I don't understand."

"Well, don't bring me into this."

"I will not."

"He's at the bottom of the whole business. He's the lawyer 't gives the dope and takes care of 'em. He owns the place—'t least, Mick Raffity and Gallagin and Smooth Ally own the places; and he owns them. He knows all about it and they don't turn a hand without him. Oh! I know him—I know 'em all!"

"You think this is the girl the lady was looking for?"

"I don't know. I only know she went there, and Gallagin showed his teeth, and then I called him down and got the gal out. I skeered him."

"Well, we'll see."

"Well, I must be goin'. I've told you. Swear you won't bring me into it. Good-night."

"I will not."

The man gazed down the street one way, then turned and went off in the other direction. John was puzzled, but a gleam of light came to him. Wolffert! Wolffert was the man to consult. What this man said was just what Wolffert had always insisted on: that "the White Slave traffic" was not only the most hideous crime now existing on earth, but that it was protected and promoted

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by men in power in the city; that it was, indeed, international in its range. He remembered to have heard him say that a law had been passed to deal with it; but that such law needed the force of an awakened public conscience to become effective.

Thus it was, that that morning Wolffert was aroused by John Marvel coming into his room. In an instant he was wide awake, for he, too, knew of the disappearance of Elsa, and of our fruitless hunt for her.

"But you are sure that this woman is Elsa?" he asked as he hurriedly dressed.

"No—only that it is some one."

"So much the better—maybe."

An hour later Wolffert and John Marvel were in a lawyer's office in one of the great new buildings of the city, talking to a young lawyer who had recently become a public prosecutor, not as a representative of the city, but of a larger power, that of the nation. He and Wolffert were already friends, and Wolffert had a little while before interested him in the cause to which he had for some time been devoting his powers. It promised to prove a good case, and the young attorney was keenly interested. The bigger the game, the better he loved the pursuit.

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"Who's your mysterious informant, Mr. Marvel?" he asked.

"That I cannot tell you. He is not a man of good character, but I am sure he is telling me the truth."

"We must make no mistakes—we don't want these people to escape, and the net will catch bigger fish, I hope, than you suspect. Why not tell?"

"I cannot."

"Well, then I shall have to get the proof in some other way. I will act at once and let you hear from me soon. In fact, I have a man on the case now. I learned of it yesterday from my cousin, you know. She is deeply interested in trying to break up this vile business, and a part of what you say I already knew. But the clues lead to bigger doors than you dream of."

John and Wolffert came away together and decided on a plan of their own. Wolffert was to come to see me and get Langton interested in the case, and John was to go to see Langton to send him to me. He caught Langton just as he was leaving his house to come to my office and walked a part of the way back with him, giving him the facts he had learned. He did not know that Langton was already on the case, and the close-mouthed detective never told anything.

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When they parted, Langton came to my office, and together we went to the district attorney's, who, after a brief talk, decided to act at once, and accordingly had warrants issued and placed in the hands of his marshal.

"I have been trying for some time to get at these people," he said, "and I have the very man for the work—an officer whom Coll McSheen turned out for making trouble for the woman who keeps that house."

Aroused by my interest in the Loewens and by what Langton had told me of Miss Leigh's daring the night before, I secured the marshal's consent to go along with them, the district attorney having, indeed, appointed me a deputy marshal for the occasion.

The marshal's face had puzzled me at first, but I soon recognized him as the officer I had met once while I watched a little child's funeral. "They were too many for me," he said in brief explanation. "Mrs. Collis had me turned out. She had a pull with the Big Chief. And when I went for his friend, Smooth Ally, he bounced me. But I'm all right now, Mr. Semmes knows me, and Coll McSheen may look out. I know him."

I do not know what might have happened had we been a little later in appearing on the scene.

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As, after having sent a couple of men around to the back of the block, we turned into the street, we saw three or four men enter the house as though in a hurry. We quickened our steps, but found the door locked, and the voices within told that something unusual was going on. The high-pitched voice of a woman in a tirade and the low growls of men came to us through the door, followed by the noise of a scuffle and the smashing of furniture; a thunderous knock on the door, however, brought a sudden silence.

As there was no response either to the knock or ring, another summons even more imperative was made, and this time a window was opened above, a woman thrust her head out and in a rather frightened voice asked what was wanted. The reply given was a command to open the door instantly, and as the delay in obeying appeared somewhat unreasonable, a different method was adopted. The door was forced with an ease which gave me a high idea of the officer's skill. Within everything appeared quiet, and the only circumstance to distinguish the house from a rather tawdry small hotel of a flashy kind was a man and that man, John Marvel, with a somewhat pale face, his collar and vest torn, and a reddish lump on his forehead, standing quietly in

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the doorway of what appeared to be a sitting-room where the furniture had been upset, and the woman whom I had formerly seen when I visited the place with a police officer, standing at the far end of the hall in a condition of fright bordering on hysterics. I think I never saw men so surprised as those in our party were to find a preacher there. It was only a moment, however, before the explanation came.

"She's here, I believe," said John, quietly, "unless they have gotten her away just now."

His speech appeared to have unchained the fury of the woman, for she swept forward suddenly like a tornado, and such a blast of rage and abuse and hate I never heard pour from a woman's lips. Amid tears and sobs and savage cries of rage, she accused John Marvel of every crime that a man could conceive of, asserting all the while that she herself was an innocent and good woman and her house an absolutely proper and respectable home. She imprecated upon him every curse and revenge which she could think of. I confess that, outraged as I was by the virago's attack, I was equally surprised by John Marvel's placidness and the officer's quiet contempt. The only thing that John Marvel said was:

"There were some men here just now."

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"Liar! Liar! Liar!" screamed the woman. "You know you lie. There is not a man in this house except that man, and he came here to insult me—he who comes here all the time—you know you do, ———!"

"Where are the men?" demanded the marshal quietly, but he got no answer except her scream of denial.

"They were after me," said John, "but when you knocked on the door they ran off."

Another outpour of denial and abuse.

"Come on, men," said the marshal.

John Marvel had been troubled by no such scruples as had appeared to me. He was not afraid for his reputation as I had been for mine. And on his way home he had had what he felt to be, and what, far be from me to say was not, a divine guidance. A sudden impulse, or "call" as he termed it, had come to him to go straight to this house, and, having been admitted, he demanded the lost girl. The woman in charge denied vehemently that such a girl had ever been there or that she knew anything of her, playing her part of outraged modesty with a great show of sincerity. But when Marvel persisted and showed some knowledge of the facts, she took another tack and began to threaten him. He

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was a preacher, she said, and she would ruin him. She would call in the police, and she would like to see how it would look when an account came out in the newspapers next morning of his having visited what he thought a house of ill repute. She had friends among the police, and bigger friends even than the police, and they would see her through.

John quietly seated himself. A serene and dauntless resolution shone from his eyes. "Well, you had better be very quick about it," he said, "for I have already summoned officers and they will be here directly."

Then the woman weakened and began to cringe. She told him the same story that she had told me and the policeman when we had called before. A young woman had come there with a gentleman whom she called her husband, but she would not let her stay because she suspected her, etc., etc.

"Why did you suspect her?"

"Because, and because, and because," she explained. "For other reasons, because the man was a foreigner."

John Marvel, for all his apparent heaviness, was clear-headed and reasonable. He was not to be deceived, so he quietly sat and waited. Then the woman had gone, as she said, to call the

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police, but, as was shown later, she had called not the police, but Gallagin and Mick Raffity and the man who stood behind and protected both of these creatures and herself, and the men who had come in response had been not officers of the police, but three scoundrels who, under a pretence of respectability, were among the most dangerous instruments used by Coll McSheen and his heelers. Fortunately for John Marvel, we had arrived in the nick of time. All this appeared later.

Unheeding her continued asseverations and vituperation, the marshal proceeded to examine the house. The entire lower floor was searched without finding the woman. In the kitchen below, which was somewhat elaborate in its appointments, a number of suspiciously attired and more than suspicious-looking young women were engaged, apparently, in preparing to cook, for as yet the fire was hardly made, and in scrubbing industriously. Up-stairs a number more were found. For the moment nothing was said to them, but the search proceeded. They were all manifestly in a state of subdued excitement which was painful to see, as with dishevelled hair, painted faces and heaving bosoms, they pretended to be engaged in tasks which manifestly they had

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rarely ever attempted before. Still there was no sign of Elsa, and as the proprietor declared that we had seen every room except that in which her sick daughter was asleep, it looked as though Elsa might not have been there after all.

“Let us see your daughter,” said the officer.

This was impossible. The doctor had declared that she must be kept absolutely quiet, and in fact the woman made such a show of sincerity and motherly anxiety, that I think I should have been satisfied. The marshal, however, knew his business better—he insisted on opening the door indicated, and inside, stretched on a dirty pallet, was a poor creature, evidently ill enough, if not actually at the point of death. It was not, however, the woman’s daughter; but to my unspeakable horror, I recognized instantly the poor girl I had once rescued from a less cruel death and had turned over to the Salvation Army. There was no mistaking her. Her scarred face was stamped indelibly on my memory. She presently recognized me too; but all she said was, “They got me back. I knew they would.” We turned her over to John Marvel, while awaiting the ambulance, and continued our search, which threatened to prove fruitless so far as Elsa Loewen was concerned. But at this moment a curious thing oc-

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curred. Dixey, who had been following me all the morning and had, without my taking notice of him, come not only to the house with us, but had come in as well, began to nose around and presently stopped at a door, where he proceeded to whimper as he was accustomed to do when he wished to be let in at a closed door. I called him off, but though he came, he went back again and again, until he attracted the officer's attention. The door was a low one, and appeared to be the entrance only to a cupboard.

"Have we been in that room?"

The woman declared that we had, but as we all knew it had not been entered, she changed and said it was not the door of a room at all, but of a closet.

"Open it!" said the officer.

"The key is lost," said the woman. "We do not use it!"

"Then I will open it," said the marshal, and the next moment the door was forced open. The woman gave a scream and made a dash at the nearest man, beside herself with rage, fighting and tearing like a wild animal. And well she might, for inside, crumpled up on the floor, under a pile of clothing, lay the girl we were searching for, in a comatose state. She was lifted carefully and brought out into the light, and I scarcely

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knew her, so battered and bruised and dead-alive the poor thing appeared. Dixey, however, knew, and he testified his affection and gratitude by stealing in between us as we stood around her and licking the poor thing's hand. It was a terrible story that was revealed when the facts came out, and its details were too horrifying and revolting to be put in print, but that night Madam Snow's hotel was closed. The lights which had lured so many a frail bark to shipwreck were extinguished, and Madam Snow and her wretched retinue of slaves, who had been bound to a servitude more awful than anything which history could tell or romance could portray, were held in the custody of the marshal of the United States.

The newspapers next day, with one exception, contained an account of the "pulling" of Smooth Ally's place. That exception was *The Trumpet*. But a day or two later John Marvel received a cheque for \$200 from Coll McSheen "for his poor." I had never seen Wolffert show more feeling than when John, in the innocence of his heart, told him of the gift. "It is the wedge of Achan!" he exclaimed. "It is hush money. It is blood money. It is the thirty pieces of silver given for blood. Even Judas returned it." He made his proof clear, and the money was returned.

XXXII

“DOCTOR CALAPHAS”

IT was the duty of the street car company under their charter to run through cars every day or forfeit their charter—a wise provision, doubtless; but one which did not contemplate that Coll McSheen who was trying to destroy the company should have control of the police on whose protection the ability to carry out the charter depended.

Under the compulsion of this requirement to run through cars, the management of the street car line, after much trouble, secured a few men who, for a large price, agreed to operate the cars. But it was several hours after the regular time before the first car ran out of the shed. It made its way for some distance without encountering any difficulty or even attracting any attention beyond a few comments by men and women walking along the streets or standing in their doors. A little further along there were a few jeers, but presently it turned a corner and reached a point

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in a street where a number of boys were playing, as usual, and a number of men out of work were standing about smoking their pipes and discussing with some acrimony the action of the meeting which had called the strike, and with some foreboding the future. As the car stopped for a moment to take on a woman who had been waiting, a number of the boys playing in the street began to jeer and hoot the motorman, who was evidently somewhat unaccustomed to handling his car, and when he attempted to loosen his brake, and showed therein his unskilfulness, jeers turned into taunts, and the next moment a few handfuls of rubbish picked up in a gutter were flung at him. In a twinkling, as if by magic, the street filled, and vegetables taken from in front of a neighboring shop, mingled with a few stones, began to rattle against the car, smashing the windows with much noise. The rattling glass quickly attracted attention. It was like a bugle call, and in a minute more the road was blocked and a dozen youths sprang upon the car and a fierce fight ensued between them and the motorman and conductor, both of whom were soundly beaten and might have been killed but for their promise to give up their job and the somewhat tardy arrival of the police who had been promised,

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but had appeared on the scene only after the riot had taken place. This collision, which was begun by a lot of irresponsible boys, was described under glaring head-lines in all of the afternoon papers as a riot of vast dimension. The effect of the riot, great or small, was instantaneous and far-reaching throughout the entire section. That evening the entire population of that section had changed from an attitude of reasonable neutrality to one of unequivocal hostility. It was a psychological moment. The spark had been dropped in the powder. Next day it was as if war had been declared. There were no neutrals. All had taken sides.

Before many days were out the strike had progressed so far that, instead of its being a small body of men engaged in cessation of work, with pacific methods of attempting to dissuade others who wished to continue their work from doing so, or, by some more positive form of argument known as picketing, of preventing new-comers from taking the places of those who had struck, it had developed into an active force whose frank object was to render it impossible for any man to take or hold a position as an employee of the railway company. It was not so much that meetings were frequently held and the measures advocated

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constantly grew more and more violent, nor that occasional outbreaks occurred, as that the whole temper of the people was becoming inflamed, and the conditions of life affected thereby were becoming almost intolerable. The call of the company on the mayor, as the representative of the public, to grant them protection, was promptly, if somewhat evasively, replied to. No man knew better than Coll McSheen how to express himself so that he might be understood differently by different men. It had been one of his strong cards in climbing to the altitude which he had reached. But the idea that the police would render efficient aid to the company was openly and generally scoffed at in the quarters where the strike prevailed. It was boldly declared that the police were in sympathy with the strikers. This report appeared to have some foundation, when one cold night, with the thermometer at zero, a fire broke out in the mills owned by Mr. Leigh's company, and they were gutted from foundation to roof. It was charged on the strikers; but an investigation showed that this charge, like many others, was unfounded; at least, as it alleged a direct and intentional act. The evidence proved conclusively to my mind that the fire, while of incendiary origin, was started by a gang of reckless and

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dissolute youths who had no relation whatever to the strikers, but whose purpose was to exhibit their enmity against a company which was held in such disfavor generally. This was the contention of Wolffert in his papers on the incident, and the view which Mr. Leigh afterward adopted.

It was only an expression of the general feeling that had grown up in the city under the influence of the strike—one of the baleful offspring of the condition which McSheen and Wringman and their like had been able to produce from the conflict which they had projected and fostered. The wretched youths who were arrested, told under the sweating process a series of wholly conflicting and incredible lies, and in time two of them were convicted on their own confessions, and sent to the State prison, and the strikers who had not yet resorted to extreme measures of violence got the credit of the crime.

The continued spread of the strike and of sympathy with it had already reached large proportions. The losses to business and to business men and the inconvenience to even the well-to-do classes were immense and when calculated in figures were quite staggering. The winter had set in with sudden severity. The suffering among the poor was incalculable. There was not a house or

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shop in the poorer districts where the pinch of poverty was not beginning to be felt. The wolf, which ever stands beside the door of the poor, had long since entered and cleaned out many of the small dwellings which the summer before had been the abode of hope and of reasonable content. Only the human wolves who prey on misfortune batted and fattened; the stock-brokers who organized raids on "the market," the usurers who robbed the poor more directly, but not more effectively, the thieves of one kind or another alone prospered. The cry of hunger increased while bitterness without and within had long since begun to be universal, so long as to be scarcely heeded throughout the poor quarters. The efforts of philanthropy, individual and organized, were exercised to the utmost, but the trouble was too vast to be more than touched on the outer fringe. The evil which Mr. Leigh had predicted had come to pass and his prophecy had been far more than verified. Many of the young women, turned from their factories, had disappeared from the places which knew them before and found their way to haunts like Mel Gallagin's "Gallery" and others less splendid, but not more wicked. Only in the sphere in which persons of extraordinary accumulation moved, like the Canters and the Argands,

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was there apparently no diminution in their expenditure and display. Young Canter and his comrades still flaunted their vast wealth in undisguised and irresponsible display—still gambled on the stock boards in commodities that touched the lives of pining thousands—still multiplied their horses and automobiles, and drove them recklessly through crowded streets, heedless of the pinched and scowling faces of unemployed multitudes. But older and saner heads were beginning to shake when the future was mentioned. The reefing of sails for a storm whose forerunners were on the horizon was already taking place, and every reef meant that some part of the crew which had sailed the ship so far was dropped overboard.

The devil is credited with the power to raise a tempest. Certainly tempests are raised, but sometimes even the devil cannot quiet them. Such was the case with the strike. McSheen, Wringman and Co. had been completely successful in getting the strike of the Leigh employees under way: when it started, they privately took much pride in their work. Wringman received his wage and gratified his feeling of revenge for Mr. Leigh's cool contempt of him on the occasion when he called to demand terms of him. McSheen had a score of longer standing to settle. It dated back to the

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time when Mr. Leigh, looking with clear and scornful eyes at his work, gave him to feel that at least one man knew him to the bottom of his scoundrelly soul. For a while it appeared as though Mr. Leigh would be irretrievably ruined and McSheen and his friends and secret backers like Canter would secure easy possession of the properties his power of organization had built up; but suddenly an unlooked-for ally with abundant resources had come to Mr. Leigh's assistance in the person of an old friend, and the ripened fruit of their labors had been plucked from their hands outstretched to grasp it. And now having raised the tempest, these gamblers could not calm it. In other words, having started a strike among Mr. Leigh's operatives for a specific purpose, it had spread like a conflagration and now threatened to destroy everything. The whole laboring population were getting into a state of ferment. Demands were made by their leaders such as had never been dreamed of before. The leaders were working them for their own purposes, and were after a temporary raise of wages. But there was a graver danger. The people were becoming trained. A new leader was coming forward, and his writings were having a profound influence. He could not be bullied, and he could not be bought, this

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Jew, Wolffert. He was opening the eyes of the people. Unless the thing were stopped, there would be a catastrophe which would ruin them all. This was the judgment that McSheen and Canter and Co. arrived at. And this was the conclusion that Mr. Canter, Sr., announced to his son and heir, Mr. Canter, Jr., at the close of an interview in which he had discussed his affairs with more openness than he usually employed with that audacious young operator. “The fact is,” he said, “that we have failed in the object of our move. We have not got hold of Leigh’s lines—and his men are returning to work while ours are just beginning to fight—and instead of getting his properties, we stand a blessed good show of losing our own. McSheen couldn’t deliver the goods and there is the devil to pay. Why don’t you stop your — nonsense and settle down and marry that girl? She’s the prettiest girl in town and— Well, you might go a good deal further and fare worse. There is a good property there if we don’t destroy it fighting for it. If you are ever going to do it, now is the time, and we are bound to have it, if possible, to save our own.”

Mr. Canter, Jr., shrugged his shoulders. “How do you know she would have me?” he asked with a sort of grin which was not altogether mirthful.

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He did not feel it necessary to impart to his parent the fact that he was beginning to have strong doubts himself on the subject. But Canter, Jr., was no fool.

“Well, of course, she won’t, if you go spreeing around with a lot of blanked hussies. No decent woman would. But why the deuce don’t you drop that business? You are getting old enough now to know better. And you can’t keep hitting it up as you have been doing. There’s a new system coming in in this town, and you’ll get in trouble if you don’t look out. You came precious near it the other night. Those young men mean business. Get rid of that woman.”

Young Canter for once came near disclosing to his father the whole situation and telling him the truth. He however contented himself with his usual half-light assurance that he was all right—and that he was going to settle down. He could not bring himself to tell him that he found himself bound with a chain which he could not break, and that “that woman” would not be gotten rid of. She, in fact, threatened not only to make a terrible scandal if he attempted to leave her, but actually menaced his life.

However, he determined to act on his father’s advice. He would break off from her and if he

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could carry through his plans he would marry and go abroad and remain until the storm had blown over and “that woman” had consoled herself with some other soft young millionaire.

Among all the people affected by the strike none suffered more, I believe, than John Marvel and Wolffert. I never saw any one more distressed by the suffering about them than these two men. Others suffered physically, they mentally, and in the reflexive way which comes from overwrought sympathies. Where gloom and dull hate scowled from the brows of the working class, sadness and sorrow shadowed John’s brow, though at need he always had a smile and a cheery word for every one. He was soon reduced to his last suit of clothes, and as the cold increased, he went about overcoatless and gloveless, walking like fury and beating his arms to keep himself from freezing, his worn overcoat and gloves having long since gone with everything else he had to help some one needier than himself. “Take a long, deep breath,” he used to say, “and it will warm you up like a fire. What does a young man need with an overcoat?” What, indeed, with the thermometer at zero, and rapidly slipping still lower! “Those I grieve for are the old and the sick and the young children.”

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However this was, he was busier than ever—going in and out among his poor; writing letters, making calls, appealing to those able to give, and distributing what he could collect, which, indeed, was no little, for the people at large were sympathetic with suffering and generous to poverty. And his ablest assistant in the work was Wolffert, if, indeed, he was not the leader. I never knew before what one man's intellect and zeal consecrated to a work could accomplish. The great morass of poverty, wide and profound at all times, extending through the city, sapping the foundations and emitting its exhalations, became now bottomless and boundless. Into this morass Wolffert flung himself with the earnestness of a zealot. He worked day and night, organizing relief associations; looking after individual cases; writing letters to the press and picturing conditions with a vividness which began to make an impression on all sides. He counselled patience and moderation on the part of the poor, but made no secret of his sympathy with them, and where he dealt with the injustice shown them it was with a pen of flame. The conservative papers charged that his letters added fuel to the flames already blazing. It was possibly true. Certainly, the flames were spreading.

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As the strike proceeded and violence increased, those evidences of sympathy which came in the form of contributions grew less, and at last they began to fail perceptibly. In the commotion the foulest dregs of the seething community were thrown up, the vilest scum rose to the top. As in the case of Mr. Leigh's fire, whatever outrages were committed were charged to the strikers. The press, which had begun with expressions of sympathy with the strikers, had, under the impending shadow, changed its tone and was now calling on the authorities to put down lawlessness with a strong hand; demanding that the police should be ordered to protect the property and lives of citizens, and calling on the mayor to bestir himself and call on the governor for aid.

In this state of the case John Marvel, wishing to see what could be done to ameliorate the conditions about him, called a meeting of his congregation at his church one evening just before Christmas, and when the time came the little chapel was crowded to suffocation. It was a sombre and depressing-looking crowd that thronged the aisles of the little building. Poverty and want were in every face. A hopeless, sullen misery sat on every brow. The people thought that somehow some good would come of

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it, and many who had never been inside the walls before were on hand. I went in consequence of a talk I had with Marvel, who had casually mentioned Miss Eleanor Leigh's name in connection with the first suggestion of the call. And I was rewarded, for seated back in the crowd, with her face a little more pallid than usual and her eyes filled with the light of expectancy and kindness, sat Eleanor Leigh. She was dressed with great simplicity; but her appearance was not the less attractive, at least to me. She smiled from time to time to some acquaintance in the sad-looking throng, but I had a pang of jealousy to see how her gaze followed John Marvel, and one other member of the assembly, whose presence rather surprised me, Wolffert.

After a brief service John Marvel, in a few touching and singularly apt words, explained the reason for having called them together, irrespective of their church relation, and urged that, as the blessed season which was accepted by Christendom as the time of peace on earth and good-will to all men was drawing near, they should all try to lay aside personal feeling and hates and grievances, and try what effect kindness and good-will would accomplish. He asked that all would try to help each other as formerly, and trust to the

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Divine and Merciful Master to right their wrongs and inspire compassion for their sufferings. He referred to the terrible development that had just been made among them—the discovery of Elsa and the other poor girl who had been found at the Snow house—to the sudden arousing of the law after years of praying and working, and with a word of compassion for the poor creatures who had been misled and enslaved, he urged patience and prayer as the means to secure God’s all-powerful help in their distress. His words and manner were simple and touching, and I do not attempt to give any idea of them or of their effect. But I somehow felt as though I were hearing the very teaching of Christ. He would call on one who was their friend, as they knew, the friend of all who needed a friend, to say a few words to them. He turned to Wolffert. Wolffert walked forward a few steps and turned, made a brief but powerful statement of the situation, and counselled patience and forbearance. He knew their sufferings, he said—he knew their fortitude. He knew their wrongs, but patience and fortitude would in time bring a realization of it all in the minds of the public. What was needed was to make known to the world the truth, not as changed and distorted by ignorance or evil de-

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sign, but as it existed in fact. They had a more powerful weapon than bullets or bayonets, the power of truth and justice. His own people had been preserved by Jehovah through the ages by the patience and fortitude he had given them, and God's arm was not shortened that he could not save nor his ear dulled that he could not hear. He used the same illustration that John Marvel had used: the unexpected arousing of the law to defend and save poor ignorant girls, who were being dragged down to the bottomless pit by organized infamy under the protection of men who had made themselves more powerful than the law. For these he had a few scathing words. He told of John Marvel's going to find Elsa, and referred to the aid he had received from others, those connected with the railway line on which the strike existed; and he counselled them to protect themselves, obey the law, keep the peace, and await with patience the justice of God. Efforts were being made to furnish them with fuel.

It may have been Wolffert's deep, flashing eyes, his earnest manner and vibrant voice, which affected them, for, though he held himself under strong restraint, he was deeply affected himself; but when John Marvel, after a brief prayer, dismissed them with the benediction, the people,

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men and women, passed out in almost silence and dispersed to their homes, and their murmured talk was all in a new key of resignation and even of distant hope. I felt as though I had shaken off the trammels of selfishness that had hitherto bound me, and was getting a glimpse of what the world might become in the future. This simple follower of Christ among his poor, threadbare like them, like them fireless and hungry and poor, illustrated his Master's teaching in a way which I had never seen before, and it gave me a new insight into his power. I should have liked to go up to Eleanor Leigh and make peace with her; but while I deliberated Wolffert joined her and I walked home alone and thoughtful.

The press next morning had a fairly full notice of the meeting—the first that had ever been given to the work done through the chapel and its minister. The chief notices in it were the connection of the minister with the case of Elsa Loewen and the attack on the system made by a Jew. One paper had the heading:

“JEW AND CHRISTIAN.”

Another's head-line ran:

“PREACHER MARVEL VISITS A BAGNIO.”

And it was only below that it was made plain

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that John Marvel had gone thither to rescue a lost girl. This, Kalender once informed me, was the true art of making head-lines. "Half the world don't read anything but the head-lines," he asserted, "and the other half don't remember anything else." The story made a sensation which Kalender himself might have coveted.

That day about noon Mrs. Argand received a call from her counsel, the Hon. Collis McSheen, who unfolded to her such a diabolical scheme to injure her property interests in common with those of every other important property holder in the city, by a wicked Jewish wretch and his fellow in mischief, who professed to be a preacher of the Gospel in a chapel which she had largely helped to build for the poor, that between fright and rage the good lady was scarcely able to wait long enough to summon the Rev. Dr. Capon to her house. The Hon. Collis did not mention the fact that one of his own houses was at that moment closed through the act of this scheming parson, nor that he was beginning to shake over the idea that the investigation beginning to be set on foot in consequence of the meddlesomeness of this same person might reach uncomfortably near his own door, and that he was sensible that a force was being aroused which he could not control.

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Most women trust implicitly in their lawyers, and, curiously enough, many trust them in their affairs even when they know they are dishonest. Coll McSheen knew perfectly how to deal with Mrs. Argand. He descanted eloquently on his duty to the great estate she represented and his pride in her admirable management of it. One of the great fountains of charity was in danger.

The Reverend Doctor Bartholomew Capon visited his parishioner and was quite as much upset as she herself was over the information received from Mr. McSheen. Dr. Capon had but an indifferent opinion of Mr. McSheen. He knew him to be by repute a protector of evil-doers, a man of loose morals and low instincts, but he was a man of power of the brute kind and of keen insight into the grosser conditions. And his views as to the effect on property of any movement in the city were entitled to great respect, and property, to the doctor's mind, was undoubtedly a divine institution. Moreover, a Jew who assailed it must have some ulterior design. And to think of his having been permitted to speak in his chapel! So Dr. Capon returned to his home much displeased with his assistant and, sitting down, wrote him a note immediately.

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This note John Marvel received next morning in his mail. It ran as follows:

"Mr. Marvel will call at the rector's office tomorrow, Tuesday, at 11.30 promptly.

"(Signed) BARTHOLOMEW CAPON, D.D.,
"Rector, etc., etc."

The tone of the note struck even John Marvel and he immediately brought it over to me. We both agreed that the doctor must have read the account of the raid on Madam Snow's and of his presence there when the officers arrived, and we decided that, notwithstanding the curtness of the summons, it was due to John himself to go and make a simple statement of the matter. We felt indeed that the interview might result in awakening the living interest of Dr. Capon in the work on which we had embarked and securing the co-operation not only of himself but of the powerful organization which he represented as rector of a large church. Dr. Capon was not a difficult man; in his own way, which was the way of many others, he tried to do good. He was only a worldly man and a narrow man. He felt that his mission was to the rich. He knew them better than the poor and liked them better. The poor

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had so much done for them, why should not he look after the rich? Like Simon, he believed that there was a power in money which was unlimited.

At 11.30 promptly John Marvel presented himself in the front room of the building attached to the church, in one corner of which was the rector's roomy office. A solemn servant was in waiting who took in his name, closing the door silently behind him, and after a minute returned and silently motioned John Marvel to enter. Dr. Capon was seated at his desk with a number of newspapers before him, and in response to John's "Good-morning," he simply said, "Be seated," with a jerk of his head toward a chair which was placed at a little distance from him, and John took the seat, feeling, as he afterward told me, much as he used to feel when a small boy, when he was called up by a teacher and set down in a chair for a lecture. The rector shuffled his newspapers in a sudden little accession of excitement, taking off his gold-rimmed glasses and putting them on again, and then taking up one, he turned to John.

"Mr. Marvel, I am astonished at you—I am simply astounded that you should have so far forgotten yourself and what was due to your

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orders as to have done what I read in this sheet and what the whole press is ringing with."

"Well, sir," said John, who had by this time gotten entire control of himself, and felt completely at ease in the consciousness of his innocence and of his ability to prove it. "I am not surprised that you should be astounded unless you knew the facts of the case."

"What facts, sir?" demanded Dr. Capon sternly. "Facts! There is but one fact to be considered—that you have violated a fundamental canon."

"Yes, I knew it would look so, and I had intended to come yesterday to consult you as to the best method——"

"It is a pity you had not done so—that you allowed your sense of duty to be so obscured as to forget what was due alike to me and to your sacred vows."

"But I was very much engaged," pursued John, "with matters that appeared to me of much greater importance than anything relating to my poor self."

"Oh!" exclaimed the rector. "Cease! Cease your pretences! Mr. Marvel, your usefulness is ended. Sign that paper!"

He picked up and held out to him with a tragic air a paper which he had already prepared before

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John Marvel's arrival. John's mind had for the moment become a blank to some extent under the unexpected attack, and it was a mechanical act by which his eye took in the fact that the paper thrust into his hand was a resignation declaring that it was made on the demand of the rector for reasons stated which rendered it imperative that he sever his connection with that parish.

“I will not sign that paper,” said John quietly.

“You will not what?” The rector almost sprang out of his chair.

“I will not sign that paper.”

“And pray, why not?”

“Because it places me in the position of acknowledging a charge which, even if true, has not been specifically stated, and which is not true whatever the appearances may be, as I can readily prove.”

“Not true?” the rector exclaimed. “Is it not true that you allowed a Jew to speak in your church, in my chapel?”

“That I did what?” asked John, amazed at the unexpected discovery of the rector's reason.

“That you invited and permitted a man named Wolffert, a socialistic Jew, to address a congregation in my chapel?”

“It is true,” said John Marvel, “that I invited

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Mr. Wolffert to speak to an assemblage in the chapel under my charge, and that he did so speak there."

"Uttering the most dangerous and inflammatory doctrines—doctrines alike opposed to the teaching of the church and to the command of the law?"

"That is not true," said John. "You have been misinformed."

"I do not wish or propose to discuss either this or any other matter with you, Mr. Marvel. You have allowed a Jew to speak in the house of God. Your usefulness is ended. You will be good enough to sign this paper, for you may rest assured that I know my rights and shall maintain them."

"No, I will not sign this paper," said John Marvel, "but I will resign. Give me a sheet of paper."

The rector handed him a sheet, and John drew up a chair to the desk and wrote his resignation in a half-dozen words and handed it to the rector.

"Is that accepted?" he asked quietly.

"It is." The rector laid the sheet on his desk and then turned back to John Marvel. "And now, Mr. Marvel, allow me to say that you grossly, I may say flagitiously, violated the trust I reposed in you when——"

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John Marvel held up his hand. “Stop! Not one word more from you. I am no longer your assistant. I have stood many things from you because I believed it was my duty to stand them, so long as I was in a position where I could be of service, and because I felt it my duty to obey you as my superior officer, but now that this connection is severed, I wish to say that I will not tolerate one more word or act of insolence from you.”

“Insolence?” cried the rector. “Insolence? You are insolent yourself, sir. You do not know the meaning of the term.”

“Oh! Yes, I know it,” said John, who had cooled down after his sudden outbreak. “I have had cause to know it. I have been your assistant for two years. I bid you good-morning, Dr. Capon.” He turned and walked out, leaving the rector speechless with rage.

I do not mean in relating Dr. Capon’s position in this interview to make any charge against others who might honestly hold the same view which he held as to the propriety of John Marvel’s having requested Leo Wolffert to speak in his church, however much I myself might differ from that view, and however I might think in holding it they are tithing the mint, anise, and cumin,

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and overlooking the weightier matters of the law. My outbreak of wrath, when John Marvel told me of his interview with the rector, was due, not to the smallness of the rector's mind, but to the simple fact that he selected this as the basis of his charge, when in truth it was overshadowed in his mind by the fact that Leo Wolffert's address had aroused the ire of one of his leading parishioners, and that the doctor was thus guilty of a sham in bringing his charge, not because of the address, but because of the anger of his wealthy parishioner. Wolffert was savage in his wrath when he learned how John had been treated. "Your church is the church of the rich," he said to me; for he would not say it to John. And when I defended it and pointed to its work done among the poor, to its long line of faithful devoted workers, to its apostles and martyrs, to John Marvel himself, he said: "Don't you see that Dr. Caiaphas is one of its high-priests and is turning out its prophets? I tell you it will never prosper till he is turned out and the people brought in! Your Church is the most inconsistent in the world, and I wonder they do not see it. Its Head, whom it considers divine and worships as God, lived and died in a continual war against formalism and sacerdotalism, it was the foundation of

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all his teaching for which he finally suffered death at the hands of the priests. The imperishable truth in that teaching is that God is within you, and to be worshipped ‘in spirit’ and in truth; that not the temple made with hands, but the temple of the body is the one temple, and that the poor are his chosen people—the poor in heart are his beloved disciples; yet your priests arrogate to themselves all that he suffered to overthrow. Your Dr. Capon is only Dr. Caiaphas, with a few slight changes, and presumes to persecute the true disciples precisely as his predecessors persecuted their master.”

“He is not my Dr. Capon,” I protested.

“Oh! well, he is the representative of the ecclesiasticism that crucifies spiritual freedom and substitutes form for substance. He ‘makes broad his phylacteries and for a pretence makes long prayers.’”

“It appears to me that you are very fond of quoting the Bible, for an unbeliever,” I said.

“I, an unbeliever! I, a Jew!” exclaimed Wolffert, whose eyes were sparkling. “My dear sir, I am the believer of the ages—I only do not believe that any forms established by men are necessary to bring men into communion with God—I refuse to believe selfishness and arro-

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gance and blindness, when they step forth with bell, book, and candle, and say, obey us, or be damned. I refuse to worship a ritual, or a church. I will worship only God." He turned away with that detached air which has always struck me as something oriental.

As soon as it became known in his old parish that John had resigned he was called back there; but the solicitations of his poor parishioners that he should not abandon them in their troubles prevailed, and Wolffert and I united in trying to show him that his influence now was of great importance. Indeed, the workers among the poor of every church came and besought him to remain. Little Father Tapp, patting him on the shoulder, said, "Come to us, John, the Holy Father will make you a bishop." So he remained with his people and soon was given another small chapel under a less fashionable and more spiritual rector. I think Eleanor Leigh had something to do with his decision. I know that she was so urgent for him to remain that both Dr. Capon and I were given food for serious thought.

XXXIII

THE PEACE-MAKER

IT was in this condition of affairs that a short time after John Marvel had been dismissed from his cure by his incensed rector, a great dinner was given by Mrs. Argand which, because of the lavishness of the display and the number of notable persons in the city who were present, and also because of a decision that was reached by certain of the guests at the dinner and the consequences which it was hoped might ensue therefrom, was fully written up in the press. If Mrs. Argand knew one thing well, it was how to give an entertainment which should exceed in its magnificence the entertainment of any other person in the city. She was a woman of great wealth. She had had a large experience both at home and abroad in entertainments whose expenditure remained traditional for years. She had learned from her husband the value, as a merely commercial venture, of a fine dinner. She knew the traditional way to men's hearts, and she felt that something was due to her position,

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and at the same time she received great pleasure in being the centre and the dispenser of a hospitality which should be a wonder to all who knew her. Her house with its great rooms and galleries filled with expensive pictures lent itself well to entertainment. And Mrs. Argand, who knew something of history, fancied that she had what quite approached a salon. To be sure, those who frequented it were more familiar with stock-exchanges and counting-houses than with art or literature. On this occasion she had assembled a number of the leading men of affairs in the city, with the purpose not so much of entertaining them, as of securing from them a co-operation, which, by making a show of some concession to the starving strikers and their friends, should avail to stop the steady loss in her rents and drain on even her great resources. She had already found herself compelled, by reason of the reduction in her income, which prevented her putting by as large a surplus as she had been accustomed to put by year by year, to cut off a number of her charities, and this she disliked to do, for she not only regretted having to cut down her outlay for the relief of suffering, but it was a blow to her pride to feel that others knew that her income was reduced.

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The idea of the dinner had been suggested by no less a person than Dr. Capon himself, to whom the happy thought had occurred that possibly if a huge mass meeting composed of the strikers could be assembled in some great auditorium, and addressed by the leading men in the city, they might be convinced of the folly and error of their ways and induced to reject the false teaching of their designing leaders and return to work, by which he argued the great suffering would be immediately reduced, the loss alike to labor and to capital would be stopped, peace would be restored, and the general welfare be tremendously advanced. Moreover, he would show that his removal of his assistant was not due to his indifference to the poor as Wolffert had charged in a biting paper on the episode, but to a higher motive. What John Marvel had tried on a small scale he would accomplish on a vast one. He would himself, he said, take pleasure in addressing such an audience, and he felt sure that they would listen to the friendly admonition of a minister of the Gospel, who could not but stand to them as the representative of charity and divine compassion.

I will not attempt to describe the richness of the floral decorations which made Mrs. Argand's

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great house a bower of roses and orchids for the occasion, nor the lavish display of plate, gilded and ungilded, which loaded the great table, all of which was set forth in the press the following day with a lavishness of description and a wealth of superlatives quite equal to the display at the dinner; nor need I take time to describe the guests who were assembled. Mr. Leigh, who was invited, was not present, but expressed himself as ready to meet his men half-way. Every viand not in season was in the *ménu*. It was universally agreed by the guests that no entertainment which was recalled had ever been half so rich in its decorations or so regal in its display or so sumptuous in its fare; that certainly the same number of millions had never been represented in any private house in this city, or possibly, in any city of the country. It remains only to be said that the plan proposed by the Rev. Dr. Capon met with the approval of a sufficient number to secure an attempt at its adoption, though the large majority of the gentlemen present openly expressed their disbelief that any good whatever would come of such an attempt, and more than one frankly declared that the doctor was attempting to sprinkle rose-water when really what was actually needed were guns and bayonets. The

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doctor, however, was so urgent in the expression of his views, so certain that the people would be reasonable and could not fail to be impressed by a kindly expression of interest, and the sound advice of one whom they must recognize as their friend, that a half-derisive consent was given to a trial of his plan.

Among the notices of this dinner was one which termed it "Belshazzar's Feast," and as such it became known in the workingmen's quarter. Its scorching periods described the Babylonian splendor of the entertainment provided for the officials of millionairedom, and pictured with simple art the nakedness of a hovel not five blocks away, in which an old man and an old woman had been found that day frozen to death. I recognized in it the work of Wolffert's virile pen. John Marvel might forgive Dr. Capon, but not Wolffert Dr. Caiaphas. The proposed meeting, however, excited much interest in all circles of the city, especially in that underlying circle of the poor whose circumference circumscribed and enclosed all other circles whatsoever. What was, indeed, of mere interest to others was of vital necessity to them, that some arrangement should be arrived at by which work should once more be given to the ever-increasing body of the unemployed,

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whose sombre presence darkened the brightest day and tinged with melancholy the fairest expectation. In furtherance of Dr. Capon's plan a large hall was secured, and a general invitation was issued to the public, especially to the workmen of the section where the strike existed, to attend a meeting set for the earliest possible moment, an evening in the beginning of the next week. The meeting took place as advertised and the attendance exceeded all expectation. The heart of the poor beat with renewed hope, though, like their wealthy neighbors, many of them felt that the hope was a desperate one. Still they worked toward the single ray of light which penetrated into the gloom of their situation.

The seats were filled long before the hour set for the meeting and every available foot of standing room was occupied, the corridors of the building were filled, and the streets outside were thronged with groups discussing the possibility of some settlement in low and earnest tones, broken now and then by some strident note of contention or sullen growl of hate. Knowing the interest in the movement throughout the quarter where I lived, and having some curiosity besides to hear what Coll McSheen and the Rev. Dr. Capon had to say, I went early in company with

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Wolffert and John Marvel, the former of whom was absolutely sceptical, the latter entirely hopeful of permanent results. Wolffert's eyes glowed with a deep but lambent flame as he spoke of "Dr. Caiaphas." On arrival at the hall he left us and moved to the front rows. The crowd on the platform represented the leaders in many departments of business in the city, among whom were a fair sprinkling of men noted for their particular interest in all public charities and good works, and in a little group to one side, a small body composed of the more conservative element among the leaders of the workingmen in the city. The whole affair had been well worked up and on the outside it gave a fair promise of success. A number of boxes were filled with ladies interested in the movement and I had not been in the hall five minutes before I discovered Eleanor Leigh in one of the boxes, her face grave, but her eyes full of eager expectation. It was with a sinking of the heart that I reflected on the breach between us, and I fear that I spent my time much more in considering how I should overcome it than in plans to relieve the distress of others.

The meeting opened with an invocation by the Rev. Dr. Capon, which appeared to strike some of the assemblage as somewhat too eloquent, rather

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too long, and tinged with an expression of compassion for the ignorance and facility for being misguided of the working class. When he began the assemblage was highly reverent, when he ended there were murmurs of criticism and discussion audible throughout the hall. The introductory statement of the reason for the call was made by the Hon. Collis McSheen, who, as mayor of the city, lent the dignity of his presence to the occasion. It was long, eloquent, and absolutely silent as to his views on any particular method of settlement of the question at issue, but it expressed his sympathy with all classes in terms highly general and concluded with an impartial expression of advice that they should get together, provided all could get what they wanted, which appeared to him the easiest thing in the world to do. Following him, one of the magnates of the city, Mr. James Canter, Sr., delivered a brief business statement of the loss to the city and the community at large, growing out of the strike, expressed in figures which had been carefully collated, and closed with the emphatic declaration that the working people did not know what they wanted. One other thing he made plain, that in a strike the working people suffered most, which was a proposition that few persons in the hall

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were prepared to deny. Then came the Rev. Dr. Capon, who was manifestly the chief speaker for the occasion. His manner was graceful and self-assured, his voice sonorous and well modulated, and his tone was sympathetic, if somewhat too patronizing. His first sentences were listened to with attention. He expressed his deep sympathy somewhat as the mayor had done, but in better English and more modulated tones, with all classes, especially with the working people. A slight cough appeared to have attacked one portion of the audience, but it stopped immediately, and silence once more fell on the assemblage as he proceeded.

“And now,” he said, as he advanced a step nearer to the edge of the platform, and, having delivered himself of his preliminary expressions of condolence, threw up his head and assumed his best pulpit manner, “under a full sense of my responsibility to my people and my country I wish to counsel you as your friend, as the friend of the poor”—the slight cough I have mentioned became audible again—“as the friend of the workman whose interests I have so deeply at heart.”

At this moment a young man who had taken a seat well to the front on the main aisle, rose in his seat and politely asked if the doctor would allow

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him to ask him a question, the answer to which he believed would enable the audience to understand his position better. The pleasant tone of the young man led the doctor to give permission, and also the young man's appearance, for it was Wolffert.

"Certainly, my dear sir," he said.

Wolffert suddenly held up in his hand a newspaper.

"I wish," he said, "to ask you where you dined last Friday night; with whom?"

The question provoked a sudden outpour of shouts and cheers and cries of derision, and in a moment pandemonium had broken loose. The doctor attempted to speak again and again, but about all that could be heard was his vociferation that he was their friend. Wolffert, whose question had caused the commotion, was now mounted on a chair and waving his arms wildly about him, and presently, moved by curiosity, the tumult subsided and the audience sat with their faces turned toward the man on the chair. He turned and, with a sweep of his arm toward the stage, he cried:

"We don't want to hear you. What have you done that you should give us advice? What do you know of us? When have you ever hearkened to the cry of the destitute? When have you ever visited the fatherless and the widows in affliction,

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unless they were rich? When have you ever done anything but fawn on Herod and flatter Pontius? Whom are you here to help and set free to-day? These people? No! High-priest of wealth and power and usurpation, we know you and your friends—the Jesus you ask to free is not the Nazarene, but Barabbas, the robber, promoter of vice and patron of sin!”

His long arm pointed at the platform where sat McSheen, his face black with impotent rage. “If we are to have a priest to address us, let us have one that we can trust. Give us a man like John Marvel. We know him and he knows us.” He turned and pointed to Marvel.

The effect was electrical. Shouts of “Marvel! Mr. Marvel! Marvel! Marvel! John Marvel!” rang from their throats, and suddenly, as with one impulse, the men turned to our corner where John Marvel had sunk in his seat to escape observation, and in an instant he was seized, drawn forth and lifted bodily on the shoulders of men and borne to the platform as if on the crest of a tidal wave. Coll McSheen and Dr. Capon were both shouting to the audience, but they might as well have addressed a tropical hurricane. The cries of “Marvel, Marvel” drowned every other sound, and presently those on the stage gathered

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about both McSheen and the rector, and after a moment one of them stepped forward and asked John Marvel to speak.

John Marvel turned, stepped forward to the edge of the platform, and reached out one long arm over the audience with an awkward but telling gesture that I had often seen him use, keeping it extended until, after one great outburst of applause, the tumult had died down.

"My friends," he began. Another tumult.

"That is it. Yes, we are your friends."

Still the arm outstretched commanded silence.

He began to speak quietly and slowly and his voice suddenly struck me as singularly sympathetic and clear, as it must have struck the entire assembly, for suddenly the tumult ceased and the hall became perfectly quiet. He spoke only a few minutes, declaring that he had not come to speak to them; but to be with them, and pray that God might give them (he said "us") peace and show some way out of the blackness which had settled down upon them. He bade them not despair, however dark the cloud might be which had overshadowed them. They might be sure that God was beyond it and that he would give light in his own time. He was leading them now, as always—the presence of that assembly, with so

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many of the leading men of the city asking a conference, was in itself a proof of the great advance their cause had made. That cause was not, as some thought, so much money a day, but was the claim to justice and consideration and brotherly kindness. He himself was not a business man. He knew nothing of such matters. His duty was to preach—to preach peace—to preach the love of God—to preach patience and long-suffering and forgiveness, the teaching of his Lord and master, who had lived in poverty all his life, without a place to lay his head, and had died calling on God to forgive his enemies.

This is a poor summary of what he said very simply but with a feeling and solemnity which touched the great audience, who suddenly crushed out every attempt to contradict his proposition. Something had transformed him so that I could scarcely recognize him. I asked myself, can this be John Marvel, this master of this great audience? What is the secret of his power? The only answer I could find was in his goodness, his sincerity, and sympathy.

“And now,” he said in closing, “whatever happens, please God, I shall be with you and take my lot among you, and I ask you as a favor to me to listen to Dr. Capon.”

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There was a great uproar and shout; for Dr. Capon had, immediately after John Marvel got control of his audience, risen from his seat, seized his hat and coat and cane, and stalked with great majesty from the platform. There were, however, a number of other speeches, and although there was much noise and tumult, some advance was made; for a general, though by no means unanimous, opinion was shown in favor of something in the nature of a reconciliation.

As I glanced up after John Marvel returned amid the shouts to his seat, I saw Miss Leigh in one of the boxes leaning forward and looking with kindled eyes in our direction. Thinking that she was looking at me, and feeling very forgiving, I bowed to her, and it was only when she failed to return my bow that I apprehended that she was not looking at me but at John Marvel. If she saw me she gave no sign of it; and when I walked the streets that night, strikes and strikers occupied but little of my thoughts. Unless I could make up with Eleanor Leigh, the whole world might go on strike for me. I determined to consult John Marvel. He had somehow begun to appear to me the sanest of advisers. I began to feel that he was, as Wolffert had once said of him, "a sort of Ark of the Covenant."

XXXIV

THE FLAG OF TRUCE

MY acquaintance was now extending rapidly. I had discovered in the turgid tide that swept through the streets of the city other conditions and moods than those I first remarked: dark brooding shadows and rushing rapids catching the light, but fierce and deadly beneath; placid pools and sequestered eddies, far apart where the sunlight sifted in and lay soft on the drift that had escaped the flood, touching it with its magic and lending it its sweet radiance. I had found, indeed, that the city was an epitome of the world. It took a great many people to make it and there were other classes in it besides the rich and the poor. It was in one of these classes that I was beginning to find myself most at home.

I received one day an invitation to dine one evening the following week at the house of a gentleman whom I had met a week or two before and whom I had called on in response to an in-

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vation unusually cordial. I had not been to a fashionable dinner since I had come to the West, and I looked forward with some curiosity to the company whom I should meet at Mr. Desport's, for I knew nothing about him except that I had met him in a law case and we had appeared to have a number of things in common, including objects of dislike, and further, that when I called on him he lived in a very handsome house, and I was received in one of the most charming libraries it was ever my good fortune to enter, and with a graciousness on the part of his wife which I had never known excelled. It was like stepping into another world to pass from the rush of the city into that atmosphere of refinement and culture.

My heart, however, was a little lower down than it should have been, for I could not but reflect with how much more pleasure I would have arrayed myself if it had been an invitation to Mr. Leigh's. In truth, the transition from my narrow quarters and the poverty of those among whom I had been living for some time, made this charming house appear to me the acme of luxury, and I was conscious of a sudden feeling, as I passed this evening through the ample and dignified hall into the sumptuous drawing-room, that somehow I was well fitted for such surround-

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ings. Certainly I found them greatly to my taste. I was received again most graciously by Mrs. Desport, and as I had followed my provincial custom of coming a little ahead of time, I was the first visitor to arrive, a fact which I did not regret, as Mrs. Desport took occasion to tell me something of the guests whom she expected. After describing what I concluded to be a somewhat staid and elderly company, she added:

“I have given you a young lady whom I feel sure you will like. She is a little serious-minded, I think, and some people consider that she is simply posing; but however eccentric she may be, I believe that she is really in earnest, and so does my husband; and I have never seen a young girl improve so much as she has done since she took up this new work of hers.”

What this work was I was prevented from enquiring by the arrival of a number of guests all at once.

A dinner where the guests are not presented to each other differs in no important sense from a table-d'hôte dinner. The soup is likely to be a trifle colder and the guests a trifle more reserved—that is all. Mrs. Desport, however, followed the old-fashioned custom of introducing her guests to each other, preferring to open the way for

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them to feel at home, rather than to leave them floundering among inanities about the weather and their taste for opera. And though a lady, whom I presently sat next to, informed me that they did not do it "in England or even in New York now," I was duly grateful.

Having been presented to the company, I found them gay and full of animation, even though their conversation was inclined to be mainly personal and related almost exclusively to people with whom, for the most part, I had no acquaintance. The name of young Canter figured rather more extensively in it than was pleasant to me, and Dr. Capon was handled with somewhat less dignity than the cloth might have been supposed to require. I was, however, just beginning to enjoy myself when my attention was suddenly diverted by the sound of a voice behind me, as another guest arrived. I did not even need to turn to recognize Eleanor Leigh, but when I moved around sufficiently to take a side glance at her, I was wholly unprepared for the vision before me. I seemed to have forgotten how charming she looked, and she broke on me like a fresh dawn after a storm. I do not know what I was thinking, or whether I was not merely just feeling, when my hostess came forward.

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"Now we are all here. Mr. Glave, you are to take Miss Leigh in. You know her, I believe?"

I felt myself red and pale by turns and, glancing at Miss Leigh, saw that she, too, was embarrassed. I was about to stammer something when my hostess moved away, and as it appeared that the others had all paired off, there was nothing for me to do but accept the situation. As I walked over and bowed, I said in a low tone:

"I hope you will understand that I had no part in this. I did not know."

She evidently heard, for she made a slight bow and then drew herself up and took my arm.

"I should not have come," I added, "had I known of this. However, I suppose it is necessary that we should at least appear to be exchanging with ordinary interest the ordinary inanities of such an occasion."

She bowed, and then after a moment's silence added:

"I have nothing to say which could possibly interest you, and suggest that we do what I have heard has been done under similar circumstances, and simply count."

I thought of the molten metal pourable down an offender's throat. And with the thought came another: Did it mean that she was going to

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marry that young Canter? It was as if one who had entered Eden and discovered Eve, had suddenly found the serpent coiling himself between them.

“Very well.” I was now really angry. I had hoped up to this time that some means for reconciliation might be found, but this dashed my hope. I felt that I was the aggrieved person, and I determined to prove to her that I would make no concession. I was not her slave. “Very well, then—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—nine, ten, eleven, twelve—thirteen,” I said, looking straight ahead of me and dropping every syllable as if it were an oath. She gave me a barely perceptible side glance. I think I had taken her aback by my prompt compliance. She hesitated a moment.

“Or, as that is not very amusing, suppose we cap verses? I hear you know a great deal of poetry—Mr. Wolffert told me. I never knew any one with such a memory as his.” I recognized the suggestion as a flag of truce.

I bowed, and as, of course, “Mary had a little lamb” was the first thing that popped into my head with its hint of personal application, I foolishly quoted the first verse, intending her to make the personal application.

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She was prompt to continue it, with, I thought, a little sub-tone of mischief in her voice:

“It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule,”

she said demurely. There she stopped, so I took up the challenge.

“Which made the children laugh and say
‘A lamb’s a little fool.’”

It was a silly and inept ending, I knew as soon as I had finished—still, it conveyed my meaning.

She paused a moment and evidently started to look at me, but as evidently she thought better of it. She, however, murmured, “I thought we would quote verses, not make them.”

I took this to be a confession that she was not able to make them, and I determined to show how much cleverer I was; so, without noticing the cut of the eye which told of her wavering, I launched out:

“There was a young lady of fashion,
Who, finding she’d made quite a mash on
A certain young swain,
Who built castles in Spain,
Fell straight in a terrible passion.”

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To this she responded with a promptness which surprised me:

“A certain young lady of fashion
Had very good grounds for her passion,
It sprang from the pain
Of a terrible strain
On her friendship, and thus laid the lash on.”

I felt that I must be equal to the situation, so I began rapidly:

“I’m sure the young man was as guiltless
As infant unborn and would wilt less
If thrown in the fire
Than under her ire——”

“Than under her ire,” I repeated to myself. “Than under the ire”—what the dickens will rhyme with “wilt less”? We had reached the dining-room by this time and I could see that she was waiting with a provoking expression of satisfaction on her face over my having stalled in my attempt at a rhyme. I placed her in her chair and, as I took my own seat, a rhyme came to me—a poor one, but yet a rhyme:

“And since, Spanish castles he’s built less,”

I said calmly as I seated myself, quite as if it had come easily.

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"I was wondering how you'd get out of that," she said with a little smile which dimpled her cheek beguilingly. "You know you might have said,

"And since, milk to weep o'er he's spilt less';

or even,

"And since, striped mosquitoes he's kilt less.'"

Either would have made quite as good a rhyme and sense, too."

I did not dare let her see how true I thought this. It would never do to let her make fun of me. So I kept my serious air.

I determined to try a new tack and surprise her. I had a few shreds of Italian left from a time when I had studied the poets as a refuge from the desert dulness of my college course, and now having, in a pause, recalled the lines, I dropped, as though quite naturally, Dante's immortal wail:

"Nessum maggior dolore
Che ricordarci del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

I felt sure that this would at least impress her with my culture, while if by any chance she knew the lines, which I did not apprehend, it would

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impress her all the more and might prove a step toward a reconciliation.

For a moment she said nothing, then she asked quietly, "How does the rest of it go?"

She had me there, for I did not know the rest of the quotation.

"‘E ciò sa il tuo dottore,’"

she said with a cut of her eye, and a liquid tone that satisfied me I had, as the saying runs, "stepped from the frying-pan into the fire."

She glanced at me with a smile in her eyes that reminded me, through I know not what subtle influence, of Spring, but as I was unresponsive she could not tell whether I was in earnest or was jesting.

I relapsed into silence and took my soup, feeling that I was getting decidedly the worst of it, when I heard her murmuring so softly as almost to appear speaking to herself:

"‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,
‘To talk of other things—
Of ships and shoes and sealing-wax,
And cabbages and Kings.’"

I glanced at her to find her eyes downcast, but a beguiling little dimple was flickering near the

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corners of her mouth and her long lashes caught me all anew. My heart gave a leap. It happened that I knew my Alice much better than my Dante, so when she said, "You can talk, can't you?" I answered quietly, and quite as if it were natural to speak in verse:

"'In my youth,' said his father, 'I took to the Law,
And argued each case with my wife,
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life.'"

She gave a little subdued gurgle of laughter as she took up the next verse:

"'You are old,' said the youth. 'One would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever,
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?'"

I hoped that she was embarrassed when I found that she had taken my napkin by mistake, and she was undoubtedly so when she discovered that she had it.

"I beg your pardon," she said as she handed me hers.

I bowed.

With that, seeing my chance, I turned and spoke to the lady on my other side, with whom I

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was soon in an animated discussion, but my attention was not so engrossed by her that I did not get secret enjoyment out of the fact when I discovered that the elderly man on the other side of Miss Leigh was as deaf as a post and that she had to repeat every word that she said to him.

The lady on the other side of me was rambling on about something, but just what, I had not the least idea (except that it related to the problem-novel, a form of literature that I detest), as I was soon quite engrossed in listening to the conversation between Eleanor Leigh and her deaf companion, in which my name, which appeared to have caught the gentleman's attention, was figuring to some extent.

"Any relation to my old friend, Henry Glave?" I heard him ask in what he doubtless imagined to be a whisper.

"Yes, I think so," said Miss Leigh.

"You say he is not?"

"No, I did not say so; I think he is."

"He is a fine lawyer," I heard him say, and I was just pluming myself on the rapid extension of my reputation, when he added, "He is an old friend of your father's, I know. I was glad to hear he had come up to represent your father in

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his case against those rascals.—A friend of yours, too,” were the next words I heard, for decency required me to appear to be giving some attention to my other neighbor, whom I devoutly wished in Ballyhac, so I was trying resolutely, though with but indifferent success, to keep my attention on the story she was telling about some one whom, like Charles Lamb, I did not know, but was ready to damn at a venture.

“He told me he came on your account, as much as on your father’s,” said the gentleman, rallying. “You had better look out. These old bachelors are very susceptible. No fool like an old fool, you know.”

To this Miss Eleanor made some laughing reply, from which I gathered that her neighbor was a bachelor himself, for he answered in the high key which he mistook for a whisper:

“You had better not say that to me, for if you do, I’ll ask you to marry me before the dessert.”

I was recalled to myself by my other neighbor, who had been talking steadily, asking me suddenly and in a tone which showed she demanded an answer:

“What do you think of that?”

“Why, I think it was quite natural,” I said.

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"You do?"

"Yes, I do," I declared firmly.

"You think it was natural for him to run off with his own daughter-in-law!" Her eyes were wide with astonishment.

"Well, not precisely natural, but—under the circumstances, you see, it was certainly more natural than for him to run off with his mother-in-law—you will have to admit that."

"I admit nothing of the kind," she declared, with some heat. "I am a mother-in-law myself, and I must say I think the jibes at mothers-in-law are very uncalled for."

"Oh! now you put me out of court," I said. "I did not mean to be personal. Of course, there are mothers-in-law and mothers-in-law."

Happily, at this moment the gentleman on her other side insisted on securing her attention, and I turned just in time to catch the dimples of amusement that were playing in Eleanor Leigh's face. She had evidently heard my mistake.

"Oh! he is so deaf!" she murmured, half turning to me, though I was not quite sure that she was not speaking to herself. The next second she settled the question. "He is so distressingly deaf," she repeated in an undertone, with the faintest accent of appeal for sympathy in her voice.

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I again recognized the flag of truce. But I replied calmly:

"I passed by his garden and marked with one eye
How the owl and the panther were sharing a pie.
The panther took pie-crust and gravy and meat,
While the owl had the dish as its share of the treat."

The color mantled in her cheek and she raised her head slightly.

"Are you going to keep that up? I suppose we shall have to talk a little. I think we are attracting attention. For Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud! We are being observed."

But I continued:

"When the pie was all finished, the owl, as a boon,
Was kindly permitted to pocket the spoon."

"It is very rude of you to go on in that way when I am speaking. You remind me of a machine," she smiled. "Here am I stuck between two men, one of whom cannot hear a word I say, while the other does nothing but run on like a machine." I observed, with deep content, that she was becoming exasperated.

At that moment the hostess leaned forward and said:

"What are you two so interested in discussing

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there? I have been watching, and you have not stopped a minute."

Eleanor Leigh burst into a laugh. "Mr. Glave is talking Arabic to me."

"Arabic!" exclaimed the hostess. "Mr. Glave, you have been in the East, have you?"

"Yes, he came from the East where the wise men always come from," said Miss Leigh. Then turning to me she said in an undertone, "You see what I told you."

For reply, I simply quoted on, though I had a little pang as I saw the shadow come into her eyes and the smile leave her mouth.

"My father was deaf,
And my mother was dumb,
And to keep myself company,
I beat the drum."

"I think that was a very good occupation for you," she said, turning away, with her head very high.

"Will you let me say something to you?" she said in a low tone a moment later, and, without waiting, she added:

"I think it was rather nasty in me to say what I said to you when you first came in, but you had treated me so rudely when I spoke to you on the street."

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"You do not call it rude not to answer a letter when a gentleman writes to explain an unfortunate mistake, and then cut him publicly?"

"I did not receive it until afterward," she said. "I was away from town, and as to cutting you—I don't know what you are talking about."

"At the Charity Fair."

"I never saw you. I wondered you were not there."

Had the earth opened, I could not have felt more astounded, and had it opened near me I should possibly have sprung in in my confusion. I had, as usual, simply made a fool of myself, and what to do I scarcely knew. At this instant the hostess arose, and the dinner was over and with it I feared my chance was over too.

"Give me a moment. I must have one moment," I said as she passed me on her way out of the dining-room with the other ladies, her head held very high.

She inclined her head and said something in so low a tone that I did not catch it.

King James I never detested tobacco as I did those cigars smoked that evening. When, at last, the host moved to return to the drawing-room, I bolted in only to be seized on by my hostess and presented to a middle-aged and waistless

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lady who wanted to ask me about the Pooles, whom she had heard I knew. She had heard that Lilian Poole had not married very happily. "Did I know?"

"No, I did not know," nor, in fact, did I care, though I could not say so. Then another question: "Could I tell why all the men appeared to find Miss Leigh so very attractive?" Yes, I thought I could tell that—"Because she is very attractive."

"Oh well, yes, I suppose she is—pretty and all that, with a sort of kitteny softness—but——"

"There is no 'but' about it," I interrupted brusquely—"she is just what you said—very attractive. For one thing, she has brains; for another, heart. Neither of them is so common as not to be attractive." I thought of the young tigress concealed in that "kitteny softness" of which the lady spoke, and was determined not to permit the sly cat to see what I really felt.

"Of course, you know she is going to marry Mr. Canter? He is the best *parti* in town."

"Of course, I do not know anything of the kind," I said bowing. "Since I had the honor of sitting by her I am thinking of marrying her myself."

"I know it. They all fall at the first encounter!" exclaimed the lady, and I saw she had no humor,

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and decided to hedge. "I only mean that I do not believe Miss Leigh would marry Mr. Canter or any one else for his money, or for any other reason except the best."

Finally, having escaped from her, I was just making my way toward Miss Leigh, who had been standing up talking to two men who on entering the room had promptly sought her out, when a servant entered and spoke to the hostess, who immediately crossed over and gave his message to Miss Leigh. "Mr. James Canter has called for you; must you go?"

"Yes, I fear I must." So with hardly a glance at me she passed out, leaving the room so dark that I thought the lights had been dimmed, but I discovered that it was only that Miss Eleanor Leigh had left. I could not in decency leave at once, though I confess the place had lost its charm for me, especially since I learned that Miss Leigh's escort for the ball was Mr. James Canter. I had other reasons than jealousy for preferring that he should not be Eleanor Leigh's escort. In my meditations that night as I walked the streets, Mr. James Canter held a somewhat conspicuous place.

James Canter was possibly the most attentive of all the beaux Miss Leigh had, and they were

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more numerous than I at that time had any idea of. He was prospectively among the wealthiest young men in the city, for his father, who idolized him, was one of the largest capitalists in the State. He was, as the stout lady had said, certainly esteemed by ambitious mammas among the most advantageous *partis* the city could boast of. And he was of all, without doubt, the most talked of. Moreover, he had many friends, was lavish in the expenditure of his money beyond the dream of extravagance, and what was called, not without some reason, a good fellow. Before I met him I had already had a glimpse of him as he "bucked" against his rival, Count Pushkin, on the night when, dejected and desperate, I, in a fit of weakness, went into the gambling-house determined to stake my last dollar on the turn of the wheel, and the sight of Pushkin saved me. But it was after I met him that I came to know what the pampered young man was. I was beginning now to be thrown with some of the lawyers and this had led to further acquaintances, among them young Canter. At first, I rather liked him personally, for he was against Pushkin and his gay manner was attractive. He was good-looking enough after the fleshly kind—a big, round, blondish man, only he was too fat and at twenty-

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eight had the waist and jowl of a man of forty who had had too many dinners and drunk too much champagne. But when I came to know him I could not see that he had a shred of principle of any kind whatsoever. His reputation among his friends was that had he applied himself to business, he would have made a reputation equal to his father's, which was that of a shrewd, far-sighted, cool-headed man of business who could "see a dollar as far as the best of them," but that he was squandering his talents in sowing a crop of wild oats so plentiful that it was likely to make a hole even in his father's accumulated millions, and its reaping might be anywhere between the poor-house and the grave. I knew nothing of this at the time, and after I came to know him as I did later, my judgment of him took form from the fact that I discovered he not only did not tell the truth, but had lost the power even to recognize it. Still, I think my real appraisement of him came when I discovered that he was paying assiduous attentions to Miss Leigh. I could not help remarking the frequency with which I found his name in juxtaposition with hers in the published accounts of social functions, where "Mr. Canter led the cotillion with Miss Leigh," or "Mr. Canter drove his coach with Miss Leigh on the

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box seat," etc., etc., and as my acquaintance began to extend among the young men about town, I heard more than occasional conjectures as to their future. It appeared to be accepted rather as a matter of course that the result lay entirely with the young man. It was a view that I fiercely rejected in my heart, but I could say nothing beyond a repudiation of such a view in general.

In view of my knowledge of Mr. Canter, it was natural enough that I should be enraged to find him the escort of Eleanor Leigh, and I fear my temper rather showed itself in the conversation which took place and which soon became general, partly because of the earnestness with which I expressed my views on the next subject that came up. The two or three young girls of the company had left at the same time with Miss Leigh, and the ladies who remained were, for the most part, married women of that indefinite age which follows youth after a longer or shorter interval. They had all travelled and seen a good deal of the world, and they knew a good deal of it; at least, some of them did and they thought that they knew more than they actually did know.

They agreed with more unanimity than they had yet shown on any subject that America was

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hopelessly bourgeois. Listening to them, I rather agreed with them.

"Take our literature, our stage, our novels," said one, a blonde lady of some thirty-five years, though she would, possibly, have repudiated a lustrum and a half of the measure.

"You differentiate the literature and the novels?" I interrupted.

"Yes. I might—but—I mean the lot. How provincial they are!"

"Yes, they appear so. Well?"

"They do not dare to discuss anything large and vital."

"Oh! yes, they dare. They are daring enough, but they don't know how—they are stupid."

"No, they are afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?"

"Of public opinion—of the bourgeois so-called virtue of the middle class who control everything."

"That is the only valid argument I ever heard in favor of the bourgeois," I said.

"What do you mean? Don't you agree with me?"

"I certainly do not. I may not seek virtue and ensue it; but at least I revere it."

"Do you mean that you think we should not write or talk of anything—forbidden?"

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"That depends on what you mean by forbidden. If you mean——"

"I think there should be no subject forbidden," interrupted the lady by whom I had sat at table, a stout and tightly laced person of some forty summers. "Why shouldn't I talk of any subject I please?" She seemed to appeal to me, so I answered her.

"I do not at this instant think of any reason except that it might not be decent."

This raised an uncertain sort of laugh and appeared for a moment to stagger her; but she was game, and rallied.

"I know—that is the answer I always get."

"Because it is the natural answer."

"But I want to know why? Why is it indecent?"

"Simply because it is. Indecent means unseemly. Your sex were slaves, they were weaker physically, less robust; they were made beasts of burden, were beaten and made slaves. Then men, for their own pleasure, lifted them up a little and paid court to them, and finally the idea and age of chivalry came—based on the high Christian morality. You were placed on a pinnacle. Men loved and fought for your favor and made it the guerdon of their highest emprise, guarded you

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with a mist of adoration, gave you a halo, worshipped you as something cleaner and better and purer than themselves; built up a wall of division and protection for you. Why should you go and cast it down, fling it away, and come down in the mire and dust and dirt?"

"But I don't want to be adored—set up on a pedestal."

"Then you probably will not be," interrupted my deaf neighbor.

"I want to be treated as an equal—as an—an—intelligent being."

"I should think that would depend on yourself. I do not quite understand whom you wish to be the equal of—of men? Men are a very large class—some are very low indeed."

"Oh! You know what I mean—of course, I don't mean that sort."

"You mean gentlemen?"

"Certainly."

"Then I assure you you cannot discuss indecent subjects in mixed company; gentlemen never do. Nor write coarse books—gentlemen never do nowadays—nor discuss them either."

"Do you mean to say that great novelists never discuss such questions?" she demanded triumphantly.

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"No, but it is all in the manner—the motive. I have no objection to the matter—generally, provided it be properly handled—but the obvious intention—the rank indecentness of it. See how Scott or George Eliot or Tolstoi or Turgénieff or, later on, even Zola, handles such vital themes. How different their motive from the reeking putrescence of the so-called problem novel."

"Oh! dear! they must be very bad indeed!" exclaimed a lady, shocked by the sound of my adjectives.

"They are," suddenly put in my oldest neighbor, who had been listening intently with his hand behind his ear, "only you ladies don't know how bad they are or you would not discuss them with men."

This closed the discussion and a group of ladies near me suddenly branched off into another subject and one which interested me more than the discussion of such literature as the trash which goes by the name of the problem novel.

"Who is Eleanor Leigh in love with?" asked some one irrelevantly—a Mrs. Arrow—whose mind appeared much given to dwelling on such problems. She addressed the company generally, and possibly my former neighbor at the table in particular.

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"Is she in love?" asked another.

"Certainly, I never saw any one so changed. Why, she has been moping so I scarcely know her. And she has taken to charity. That's a sure sign. I think it must be that young preacher she talks so much about."

"Well, I don't know who she is in love with," said the lady who had sat next to me at dinner, "but I know who she is going to marry. She is going to marry Jim Canter. Her aunt has made that match."

"Oh! do you think so?" demanded our hostess, who had joined the group. "I don't believe she will marry any one she is not in love with, and I can't believe she is in love with that fat, coarse, dissipated creature. He is simply repulsive to me."

I began to conceive an even higher opinion of my hostess than I had already had.

"I don't think it is anybody," continued our hostess.

"Oh! yes, you do—you think it is Dr. Capon."

"Dr. Capon! It is much more likely to be Mr. Marvel."

"Mr. Marvel! Who is he?—Oh, yes, the young preacher who turned Jew and was put out of his church. I remember now."

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"Is Mr. Marvel a Jew?" I enquired. "Oh! yes, indeed, and a terrible socialist."

"Ah, I did not know that."

"I heard she was going to marry a Jew," interjected another lady corroboratively, "but I must say it looks very much like Mr. Canter to me."

"Oh! she wouldn't marry a Jew," suggested Mrs. Arrow. "I heard there was a young lawyer or something."

"She would if she'd a mind to," said our hostess.

"I still stand by Dr. Capon," declared Mrs. Arrow. "He is so refined."

"And I by Jim Canter—I thought at one time it was Count Pushkin; but since Milly McSheen has taken him away, the other seems to be the winning card. I must say I think the count would have been the better match of the two."

"I don't think that," exclaimed the other lady. "And neither would you, if you knew him."

"Possibly, she knows the other," I suggested.

"Oh! no—you see she could get rid of the count, if he proved too objectionable, and then she would still have the title."

"I never heard a more infamous proposal," I said in an aside to our hostess. She laughed.

"No, did you—but she was only jesting——"

"Not she!" I was in no mood to tolerate jest-

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ing on the subject of Eleanor Leigh's marriage. My aside to our hostess drew the attention of the others to me, and Mrs. Arrow suddenly said: "Mr. Glave, which would you say? You know them both, don't you?"

"I do."

"Well, which would you say?"

"Neither," said I. I wanted to add that I would cheerfully murder them both before I would allow either of them to destroy Eleanor Leigh's life; but I contented myself with my brief reply.

"Oh! Mr. Glave is evidently one of her victims," laughed our hostess, for which I was grateful to her.

I came away from my friends with the heroic determination to prevent Miss Leigh's life from being ruined and to accomplish this by the satisfactory method of capturing her myself. My resolve was a little dampened by reading in a newspaper next day the head-lines announcing an "Important Engagement," which, though no names were used, pointed clearly at Miss Leigh and the hopeful heir and partner of Mr. James Canter, Sr. Reading carefully the article, I found that the engagement was only believed to exist. I felt like a reprieved criminal.

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He who has not felt the pangs of a consuming passion has no conception of the true significance of life. The dull, cold, indifferent lover knows nothing of the half-ecstatic anguish of the true lover or the wholly divine joy of reconciliation even in anticipation. As well may the frozen pole dream of the sun-bathed tropic. It was this joy that I hugged in my heart even in face of the declaration of her expected engagement.

Next day I was talking to two or three young fellows when Canter and some episode in which he had figured as rather more defiant than usual of public opinion, came up, and one of them said to another, a friend of his and an acquaintance of mine: "What is Jim going to do when he gets married? He'll have to give up his 'friends' then. He can't be running two establishments."

"Oh! Jim ain't going to get married. He's just fooling around."

"Bet you—the old man's wild for it."

"Bet you—not now. He can't. Why, that woman——"

"Oh! he can pension her off."

"Her?—which her?"

"Well, all of 'em. If he don't get married soon, he won't be fit to marry."

It was here that I entered the conversation.

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They had not mentioned any name—they had been too gentlemanly to do so. But I knew whom they had in mind, and I was inwardly burning.

“He isn’t fit to marry now,” I said suddenly.

“What!” They both turned to me in surprise.

“No man who professes to be in love with any good woman,” I said, “and lives as he lives is fit for any woman to marry. I am speaking generally,” I added, to guard against the suspicion that I knew whom they referred to. “I know Mr. Canter but slightly; but what I say applies to him too.”

“Oh! you’d cut out a good many,” laughed one of the young men with a glance at his friend.

“No, gentlemen, I stand on my proposition. The man who is making love to a pure woman with a harlot’s kisses on his lips is not worthy of either. He ought to be shot.”

“There’d be a pretty big exodus if your views were carried out,” said one of them.

“Well, I don’t want to pose as any saint. I am no better than some other men; but, at least, I have some claim to decency, and that is fundamental. Your two-establishment gentry are no more nor less than a lot of thorough-paced blackguards.”

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They appeared to be somewhat impressed by my earnestness, even though they laughed at it. "There are a good many of them," they said. "Your friends, the socialists——"

"Yes. I know. The ultra-socialist's views I reprobate, but, at least, he is sincere. He is against any formal hard and fast contract, and his motive is, however erroneous, understandable. He believes it would result in an uplift—in an increase of happiness for all. He is, of course, hopelessly wrong. But here is a man who is debasing himself and others—all others—and, above all, the one he is pretending to exalt above all. I say he is a low-down scoundrel to do it. He is prostituting the highest sentiment man has ever imagined."

"Well, at any rate, you are vehement," said one.

"You've cut Jim out," said the other.

The conversation took place in a sort of lounging-room adjoining a down-town café frequented by young men. At this moment who should walk in but Mr. James Canter himself. The talk ceased as suddenly as cut-off steam, and when one of the young men after an awkward silence made a foolish remark about the fine day, which was in reality rainy and cold, Canter's curiosity was naturally excited.

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“What were you fellows talking about? Women?”

“No,” said one of the others—“nothing particular.”

“Yes!” I said, “we were—talking about women.”

“Whose women?”

“Yours.” I looked him steadily in the eye.

He started, but recovered himself.

“Which of 'em?” he enquired as he flung himself into a chair and looked around for a match for the cigarette which he took from a jewel-studded gold case. “I am rather well endowed with them at present. What were you saying?”

I repeated my remark about the two-establishment gentry. His face flushed angrily; but my steady eye held him in check and he took a long, inhaling breath.

“Well, I don't give a blank what you think about it, or anything else.” He expelled the smoke from his lungs.

“Perhaps—but that does not affect the principle. It stands. You may not care about the Rock of Gibraltar; but it stands and is the key to the situation.”

He was in a livid rage, and I was prepared for

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the attack which I expected him to make; but he restrained himself. His forte was insolence.

"You teach Sunday-school, don't you?"

I thought this was a reference to one whose name I did not mean his lips to sully, and I determined to forestall him.

"I do," I said quietly. "I teach for Mr. Marvel."

"I know—the psalm-singing parson who has made all that trouble in this town—he and his Jew partner. We are going to break them up."

"Both are men whose shoes you are not fit to clean; and as to making trouble, the trouble was made by those a good deal nearer you than John Marvel—your precious firm and your side-partners—Coll McSheen and David Wringman."

"Well, you'd better confine your labors to your dirty Jews and not try to interfere in the affairs of gentlemen."

"As to the latter, I never interfere in the affairs of gentlemen, and as to the dirty Jews, I assure you they are not as dirty as you are; for their dirt is all outside while yours is within."

I had supposed he would resent this, but he had his reasons for not doing so, though they were none too creditable to him. Mr. Canter was too bold with women and not bold enough with men. And a little later it transpired that with one

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woman, at least, he was as tame as he was with the other sex. The woman the young men referred to kept him in fear of his life for years, and he had neither the physical nor moral courage to break away from her.

XXXV

MR. LEIGH HAS A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE MADE HIM

THOUGH I had not acted on the principle, I had always felt that a young man had no right to pay his addresses to a young lady without giving some account of himself to her father, or whoever might stand in the relation of her natural protector; certainly that it was incumbent on a gentleman to do so. I felt, therefore, that it was necessary for me before proceeding further in my pursuit of Eleanor Leigh to declare my intention to her father. My declaration to her had been the result of a furious impulse to which I had yielded; but now that I had cooled, my principle reasserted itself. One trouble was that I did not know Mr. Leigh. I determined to consult John Marvel, and I had a sneaking hope that he might not think it necessary for me to speak about it to him. I accordingly went around to his room and after he had gotten through with a tramp or two, who had come to bleed him of any

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little pittance which he might have left, he came in. I bolted into the middle of my subject.

"John, I am in love." I fancied that his countenance changed slightly—I thought, with surprise.

"Yes. I know you are."

"How did you know it? I am in love with Eleanor Leigh." His countenance changed a shade more, and he looked away and swallowed with a little embarrassment.

"Yes. I know that too."

"How did you know it?"

He smiled. John sometimes smiled rather sadly.

"I want you to help me."

"How?"

"I don't know. I have to go and ask Mr. Leigh."

"What! Has she accepted you?" His face was, as I recalled later, full of feeling of some kind.

"No. I wish to Heaven she had! If anything, she has rejected me,—but that is nothing. I am going to win her and marry her. I am going to ask her father's permission to pay my addresses to her, and then I don't care whether he gives it or not.—Yes, I do care, too; but whether he does

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or not I am going to win her and him and marry her."

"Henry," he said gently, "you deserve to win her, and I believe, maybe—if—" He went off into a train of reflection, which I broke in on.

"I don't think I do," I said honestly, sobered by his gentleness; "but that makes no difference. I love her better than all the rest of the world, and I mean to win her or die trying. So, none of your 'maybes' and 'ifs.' I want your advice how to proceed. I have not a cent in the world; am, in fact, in debt; and I feel that I must tell her father so."

"That will scarcely tend to strengthen your chances with him," said John. My spirits rose.

"I can't help that. I feel that I must tell him!" Though I spoke so grandly, my tone contained a query.

"Yes, that's right," said John decisively. His mind had been working slowly. My spirits drooped.

I was not conscious till then how strongly I had hoped that he might disagree with me. My heart quite sank at the final disappearance of my hope. But I was in for it now. My principle was strong enough when strengthened by John's invincible soundness.

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I walked into the building in which Mr. Leigh had his offices, boldly enough. If my heart thumped, at least I had myself well in hand. The clerk to whom I addressed myself said he was not in, but was expected in shortly. Could he do anything for me? No, I wanted to see Mr. Leigh personally. Would I take a seat?

I took a chair, but soon made up my mind that if I sat there five minutes I would not be able to speak. I sat just one minute. At least, that was the time my watch registered, though I early discovered that there was no absolute standard of the divisions of time. The hands of a clock may record with regularity the revolutions of the earth, the moon, or the stars; but not the passage of time as it affects the human mind. The lover in his mistress's presence, and the lover waiting for his mistress or, for that matter, for her father, has no equal gauge of measurement of Time's passage. With the one the winged sandals of Mercury were not so fleet, with the other the leaden feet of Chronos were not so dull.

I decided that I must get out into the air; so, mumbling something to the surprised clerk about returning shortly, I bolted from the office and walked around the block. As I look back at it now, I was a rather pitiable object. I was un-

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doubtedly in what, if I were speaking and not writing, I should call "the deuce of a funk"; but for the sake of fine English I will term it a panic. My heart was beating, my mouth was dry, my knees were weak. I came very near darting off every time I reached a corner, and I should certainly have done so but for the knowledge that if I did I should never get up the courage to come back again. So I stuck and finally screwed up my courage to return to the office; but every object and detail in those streets through which I passed that morning are fastened in my mind as if they had been stamped there by a stroke of lightning.

When I walked in again the clerk said, Yes, Mr. Leigh had returned. Would I take a seat for a moment? I sat down in what was a chair of torture. A man under certain stress is at a great disadvantage in a chair. If he be engaged in reflection, the chair is a proper place for him; but if in action, he should stand. Every moment was an added burden for me to carry, which was not lightened when young Canter walked out of the office and with a surly glance at me passed on.

The clerk took my card, entered the door, and closed it after him. I heard a dull murmur of

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voices within, and then after what appeared to me an interminable wait, he reappeared and silently motioned me in. I hated him for months for that silent gesture. It seemed like Fate.

As I entered, a man past middle age with a strong face, a self-contained mouth and jaw, a calm brow, and keen eyes glanced up from a note he was writing and said:

“Excuse me a moment if you please. Won’t you take a seat?”

I sat with the perspiration breaking out as I watched the steady run of his pen over the sheet. I felt as a criminal must who watches the judge preparing to pass sentence. At length he was through. Then he turned to me.

“Well, Mr. Glave?”

I plunged at once into my subject.

“Mr. Leigh, I am a young lawyer here, and I have come to ask your permission to pay my addresses to your daughter.”

“Wha-t!” His jaw positively fell, he was so surprised. But I did not give him time.

“I have no right to ask it—to ask any favor of you, much less a favor which I feel is the greatest any man can ask at your hands. But I—love her—and—I—I simply ask that you will give me your consent to win her if I can.” I was very

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frightened, but my voice had steadied me, and I was gazing straight in his eyes.

“Does my daughter know of this extraor—of this?” He asked the question very slowly, and his eyes were holding mine.

“I hardly know what she may divine. I told her once that I thought a gentleman should not—should not try to marry a gir—a lady until he had asked her father’s permission, and she is so clear-minded that I hardly know——”

“Does she know of your attachment?”

“Yes, sir. I mean, I told her once—I——”

“I thought you said you thought a gentleman had no right to speak to her until he had gained her father’s consent!” A slight scorn had crept into his face.

“Yes, sir, I did—something like that, though not quite that—but——”

“How then do you reconcile the two?” He spoke calmly, and I observed a certain likeness to his daughter.

“I do not—I cannot. I do not try. I only say that in my cooler moments my principle is stronger than my action. I gave way to my feelings once, and declared myself, but when I got hold of myself I felt I should come to you and give you some account of myself.”

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"I see." I began to hope again, as he reflected.

"Does my daughter reciprocate this—ah—attachment?"

"No, sir. I wish to God she did; but I hope that possibly in time—I might prevail on her by my devotion." I was stammering along awkwardly enough.

"Ah!"

"I am only asking your permission to declare myself her suitor to try to win—what I would give the world to win, if I had it. I have no hope except that which comes from my devotion, and my determination to win. I have nothing in the world except my practice; but mean to succeed." I had got more confidence now. I went on to give him an account of myself, and I tried to tell him the truth, though doubtless I gave myself the natural benefit of a friendly historian. I told him frankly of my unfortunate experience in the matter of the contribution to *The Trumpet*—though I did not conceal my views on the main subject, of the corporation's relation to the public. I must say that Mr. Leigh appeared an interested auditor, though he did not help me out much. At the end, he said:

"Mr. Glave, I have some confidence in my daughter, sufficient—I may say—to have decided

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for some time back to allow her to manage her own affairs, and unless there were some insuperable objection in any given case, I should not interfere. This is one of the vital affairs in life in which a man has to fight his own battle. I refer you to my daughter. If there were an insuperable objection, of course, I should interfere." I wondered if he knew of Canter, and took some hope from his words.

The only thing that gave me encouragement was that he said, just as I was leaving:

"Mr. Glave, I used to know your father, I believe. We were at college together." I think I must have shown some feeling in my face, for he added, "We were very good friends," and held out his hand. I came away drenched with perspiration; but I felt that I had made a step in the direction of winning Eleanor Leigh, and almost as if I had gained a friend. At least, I liked him, as self-contained as he was, for he looked at times like his daughter.

That evening Miss Leigh observed something unusual in her father's expression, and finally, after waiting a little while for him to disclose what he had on his mind, she could stand it no longer.

"Dad, what is it?" she demanded.

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Mr. Leigh gazed at her quizzically.

"Well, I have had a rather strenuous day. In the first place, I got a letter from Henry Glave." Miss Eleanor's eyes opened.

"From Henry Glave! What in the world is he writing to you about?"

"He has offered me assistance," said Mr. Leigh. He took from his pocket a letter, and tossed it across the table to her, observing her with amusement as her expression changed. It, possibly, was not the Henry Glave she had had in mind.

As she read, her face brightened. "Isn't that fine! I thought he would—" She stopped suddenly.

"You wrote to him?" said Mr. Leigh.

"Yes, but I didn't know he would. I only asked his advice—I thought maybe he possibly might—knowing how he liked you. This will help us out. You will accept his offer, of course?"

Mr. Leigh nodded. "I am considering it. It was certainly very good in him. Not every man is as grateful these times. My only question is whether I ought to accept his offer."

"Why not?"

Mr. Leigh did not answer for a moment, he was deep in reflection, reviewing a past in which two older men who bore my name had borne a part,

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and was trying to look forward into the future. Presently he replied:

“Well, the fact is, I am very hard pressed.”

For answer Eleanor sprang up and ran around to him, and throwing her arm about his neck, kissed him. “You poor, dear old dad. I knew you were in trouble; but I did not like to urge you till you got ready. Tell me about it.”

Mr. Leigh smiled. It was a patronizing way she had with him which he liked while he was amused by it.

“Yes. I’m—the fact is, I’m pretty near—” He paused and reflected; then began again, “What would you say if I were to tell you that I am almost at the end of my resources?”

The girl’s countenance fell for a second, then brightened again almost immediately.

“I shouldn’t mind it a bit, except for you.”

Mr. Leigh heaved a sigh which might have been a sigh of relief.

“You don’t know what it means, my dear.”

“Oh! Yes, I do.”

“No-o. It means giving up—everything. Not only all luxuries; but—” He gazed about him at the sumptuous surroundings in his dining-room, “but all this—everything. Horses, carriages, servants, pictures—everything. Do you understand?”

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"Everything?" Eleanor's voice and look betrayed that she was a little startled.

"Yes," said her father with a nod and a sigh. "If I assign, it would all have to go, and we should have to begin afresh."

"Very well. I am ready. Of course, I don't want to be broke; but I am ready. Whatever you think is right. And I would rather give up everything—everything, than have you worried as you have been for ever so long. I have seen it."

"Nelly, you are a brick," said her father fondly, looking at her in admiration. "How did you ever happen to be your Aunt Sophy's niece?"

"Her half-niece," corrected the girl, smiling.

"It was the other half," mused Mr. Leigh.

"Tell me about it, father. How did it come? When did it happen?" she urged, smoothing tenderly the hair on his brow.

"It didn't happen. It came. It has been coming for a long time. It is the conditions——"

"I know, those dreadful conditions. How I hate to hear the word! We used to get them when we were at Miss de Pense's school,—we had to work them off—and now people are always talking about them."

"Well, these conditions," said Mr. Leigh, smiling,

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"seem a little more difficult to work off. I am rated as belonging to the capitalists and as opposed to the working class. The fact is I am not a capitalist; for my properties are good only while in active use, all my available surplus has gone into their betterment for the public use, and I am a harder-worked man than any laborer or workman in one of my shops or on one of my lines."

"That you are!" exclaimed his daughter.

"I belong to the class that produces, and we are ground between the upper and the nether millstones. Do you see?"

Eleanor expressed her assent.

"The fire, of course, cost us a lot."

"It was set on fire," interrupted his daughter.
"I know it."

"Well, I don't know—possibly. It looks so. Anyhow, it caught us at the top notch, and while the insurance amounts to something, the actual loss was incalculable. Then came the trouble with the bank. So long as I was there they knew they could not go beyond the law. So Canter and the others got together, and I got out, and, of course——"

"I know," said his daughter.

"They asked me to remain, but—I preferred to be free."

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"So do I."

"I had an overture to-day from the Canters," said Mr. Leigh, after a moment of reflection. "I do not quite know what it means, but I think I do."

"What was it?" Eleanor looked down with her face slightly averted.

"Jim Canter came from his father to propose—to suggest a *modus vivendi*, as it were. It means that they have started a blaze they cannot extinguish—that they are having trouble with their people, and fear that our people are coming around, but it means something further, too, I think." Mr. Leigh ceased talking, and appeared to be reflecting.

"What?" said the girl, after waiting a moment.

"You know—your aunt—however—" He paused.

She rose and faced him.

"Father, I wouldn't marry him to save his life—and I have told both him and Aunt Sophia so."

Mr. Leigh gave a sigh of relief.

"You, of course, declined the proposal they made?" said Eleanor.

"I did—I think they have broken with the Argand interest. I saw your aunt to-day, and had a talk with her. I think her eyes are opened at last. I told her a few plain truths."

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He dropped into reflection and a quizzical expression came into his eyes.

"I had a very remarkable thing happen to me to-day."

"What was it?" demanded his daughter.

"I had an offer of marriage made me."

Eleanor Leigh's face changed—at first it grew a shade whiter, then a shade redder.

"I know who it was," she said quickly.

"Oh!" Mr. Leigh shut his lips firmly. "I did not know."

"She is a cat! She has been sending me flowers and opera tickets all winter, and deluging me with invitations. I knew she was up to something." She spoke with growing feeling, as her father's eyes rested on her placidly with an amused expression in them. "I wouldn't be such easy game. Why, dad, she'd bore you to death—and as to me, I wouldn't live in the house with her—I couldn't." She stood with mantling cheek and flashing eye, a young Amazon girded for battle.

"I will relieve you," said her father. "It is not the feline-natured lady you have in mind; but a person quite different." Miss Eleanor looked relieved.

"Dad—it couldn't be—it was not Aunt Sophia? That would explain a lot of things. You know I

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think she's been laying some snares lately. She even forgave me when I told her the other evening that that was the last time I would ever accept an invitation from Mr. Canter, even as a favor to her. Dad, she'd make you miserable. You couldn't."

"No," said Mr. Leigh. "In fact, it was not a lady at all. It was a person of the opposite sex, and the proposal was for your hand."

"Dad! Who was it? Now, dad." She moved around the table to him, as Mr. Leigh, with eyes twinkling over his victory, shut his mouth firmly. "Dad, you'd just as well tell me at once, for you know I am going to know, so you might as well tell me and save yourself trouble. Who was it?"

Mr. Leigh took her firmly by the arms and seated her on his knee.

"Well, it was a young man who appeared quite in earnest."

"It wasn't—no, I know it wasn't him—he wouldn't have done that—and it wasn't—" (she pondered) "no, it wasn't him—and it wasn't—" She suddenly paused. "Tell me, what did he say? How did you like him? What did you say to him?"

"So you have settled who it is. Perhaps, you sent him to me?"

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‘Indeed, I did not, and I don’t know who it was. What did you tell him?’

“I told him you were of age——”

“I am not. I am twenty.”

“No, I told him you were too young—to think of such a thing——”

“I am twenty,” repeated the girl.

“That is what I told him,” said Mr. Leigh, “and that I thought you were able to take care of yourself.”

The girl rested her chin on his head and went off in a reverie.

“Dad, we must hold together,” she said. Her father drew her face down and kissed her silently. “The man who takes you away from me will have to answer with his life,” he said.

“There is no one on earth who could,” said Eleanor.

XXXVI

THE RIOT AND ITS VICTIM

IT is a terrible thing for a man with a wife and children to see them wasting away with sheer starvation, to hear his babes crying for bread and his wife weeping because she cannot get it for them. Some men in such a situation drown their sorrow in drink; others take a bolder course, and defy the law or the rules of their order.

The Railway Company, still being forced to run their cars, undertook to comply with the requirement, even though the protection of the police was withheld. The police were instructed, indeed, to be present and keep the peace, and a few were detailed, but it was known to both sides that no real protection would be granted. Coll McSheen's order to the force bore this plainly on its face—so plainly, that the conservative papers roundly denounced him for his hypocrisy, and for the first time began to side decisively with the company.

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The offer of increased wages to new men was openly scouted by the strikers generally. But in a few houses the situation was so terrible that the men yielded. One of these was the empty and fireless home of McNeil. The little Scotchman had had a bitter experience and had come through it victorious; but just as he was getting his head above water, the new strike had come—against his wishes and his vote. He had held on as long as he could—had held on till every article had gone—till his wife's poor under raiment and his children's clothes had gone for the few dollars they brought, and now he was face to face with starvation. He walked the streets day after day in company with a sad procession of haggard men hunting for work, but they might as well have hunted on the arctic floes or in the vacant desert. For every stroke of work there were a hundred men. The answer was everywhere the same: "We are laying men off; we are shutting down."

He returned home one night hungry and dejected to find his wife fainting with hunger and his children famished. "I will get you bread," he said to the children, and he turned and went out. I always was glad that he came to me that night, though I did not know till afterward what

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a strait he was in. I did not have much to lend him, but I lent him some. His face was haggard with want; but it had a resolution in it that impressed me.

"I will pay it back, sir, out of my first wages. I am going to work to-morrow."

"I am glad of that," I said, for I thought he had gotten a place.

The next morning at light McNeil walked through the pickets who shivered outside the car-barn, and entered the sheds just as their shouts of derision and anger reached him. "I have come to work," he said simply. "My children are hungry."

The first car came out that morning, and on the platform stood McNeil, glum and white and grim, with a stout officer behind him. It ran down by the pickets, meeting with jeers and cries of "Scab! scab!" and a fusillade of stones; but as the hour was early the crowd was a small one, and the car escaped. It was some two hours later when the car reappeared on its return. The news that a scab was running the car had spread rapidly, and the street near the terminus had filled with a crowd wild with rage and furiously bent on mischief. As the car turned into a street it ran into a throng that had been increas-

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ing for an hour and now blocked the way. An obstruction placed on the track brought the car to a stop as a roar burst from the crowd and a rush was made for the scab. The officer on the car used his stick with vigor enough, but the time had passed when one officer with only a club could hold back a mob. He was jerked off the platform, thrown down, and trampled underfoot. The car was boarded, and McNeil, fighting like a fury, was dragged out and mauled to death before any other officers arrived. When the police, in force, in answer to a riot-call, reached the spot a quarter of an hour later and dispersed the mob, it looked as if the sea had swept over the scene. The car was overturned and stripped to a mere broken shell; and on the ground a hundred paces away, with only a shred of bloody clothing still about it, lay the battered and mutilated trunk of what had been a man trying to make bread for his children, while a wild cry of hate and joy at the deed raged about the street.

The men who were arrested easily proved that they were simply onlookers and had never been within fifty feet of the car.

The riot made a fine story for the newspapers, and the head-lines were glaring. The victim's name was spelled according to the fancy of the

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reporter for each paper, and was correctly published only two days later.

The press, except *The Trumpet*, while divided in its opinion on many points, combined in its denouncement of the murder of the driver, and called on the city authorities to awake to the gravity of the situation and put down violence. It was indeed high time.

Moved by the similarity of the name to my friend McNeil, I walked over that afternoon to that part of the city where he had lived. It was one of the poorest streets of the poor section. The street on which I had lived at the old drummer's, with its little hearth-rug yards, was as much better than it as the most fashionable avenue was better than that. The morass, like a moving bog, had spread over it and was rapidly engulfing it.

The sidewalks were filled with loafers, men and women who wore the gloomiest or surliest looks. As I passed slowly along, trying to read the almost obliterated numbers; I caught fragments of their conversation. A group of them, men and women, were talking about the man who had been killed and his family. The universal assertion was that it served him right, and his family, too. I gleaned from their talk that the family

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had been boycotted even after he was dead, and that he had had to be buried by the city, and, what was more, that the cruel ostracism still went on against his family.

"Ay, ay, let 'em starve, we'll teach 'em to take the bread out of our mouths," said one woman, while another told gleefully of her little boy throwing stones at the girl as she came home from outside somewhere. She had given him a cake for doing it. The others applauded both of these. The milk of human kindness appeared to be frozen in their breasts.

"Much good it will do you! Do you get any more money for doing it?" said an old man with round shoulders and a thin face; but even he did not seem to protest on account of the cruelty. It was rather a snarl. Two or three young men growled at him; but he did not appear afraid of them; he only snarled back.

I asked one of the men which house was the one I was seeking. He told me, while half a dozen hooted something about the "scab."

When I came to the door pointed out I had no difficulty in recognizing it. The panels and sides were "daubed" up with mud, which still stuck in many places, showing the persecution which had been carried on. Inside, I never saw a more de-

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plorable sight. The poor woman who came to the door, her face drawn with pain and white with terror, and her eyes red with weeping, would not apparently have been more astonished to have found a ghost on the steps. She gave a hasty, frightened glance up the street in both directions, and moaned her distress.

“Won’t you step inside?” she asked, more to get the door closed between her and the terror of the street than out of any other feeling; and when I was inside, she asked me over again what I wanted. She could not take in that I had called out of charity; she appeared to think that it was some sort of official visit. When she found out, however, that such was my object, the effect was instantaneous. At first she could not speak at all; but after a little she was calm enough and poured out all her woes. She went over anew how her husband had come over from Scotland several years before and they had been quite comfortably fixed. How he had gotten work, and had belonged to the Union, and they had done well. He had, however, been obliged by the Union to strike, and they had spent all the money they had, and in addition to that had gotten into debt. So, when the strike was over, although he obtained work again, he was in debt, and the

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harassment of it made him ill. Then how he had come North to find work, and had had a similar experience. All this I knew. It was just then that her last baby was born and that her little child died, and the daughter of the employer of her husband was so kind to her, that when her husband got well again, there was talk of a strike to help others who were out, and she made him resign from the Union. Here she broke down. Presently, however, she recovered her composure. They had come to her then, she said, and told her they would ruin him.

“But I did not think they would kill him, sir,” she sobbed. “He tried to get back, but Wringman kept him out. That man murdered him, sir.”

There was not a lump of coal in the house; but her little girl had gone for some cinders, while she minded the baby. She had to go where she was not known—a long way, she said—as the children would not let her pick any where she used to get them.

When I came out I found that it had turned many degrees colder during the short time I was in the house, and the blast cut like a knife. The loafers on the street had thinned out under the piercing wind; but those who yet remained jeered

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as I passed on. I had not gotten very far when I came on a child, a little girl, creeping along. She was bending almost double under the weight of a bag of cinders, and before I reached her my sympathy was excited by the sight of her poor little bare hands and wrists, which were almost blue with cold. Her head, gray with the sifted ashes, was tucked down to keep her face from the cutting wind, and when I came nearer I heard her crying—not loud, but rather wailing to herself.

“What is the matter, little girl?” I asked.

“My hands are so cold. Oh! Oh! Oh!” she sobbed.

“Here, let me warm them.” I took the bag and set it down, and took her little ashy hands in mine to try and warm them, and then for the first time I discovered that it was my little girl, Janet. She was so changed that I scarcely knew her. Her little pinched face, like her hair, was covered with ashes. Her hands were ice. When I had gotten some warmth into them I took off my gloves and put them on her, and I picked up her bag and carried it back for her. My hands nearly froze, but somehow I did not mind it, I had such a warm feeling about my heart. I wonder men don’t often take off their gloves for little poor children.

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I marched with her through the street near her house, expecting to be hooted at, and I should not have minded it; for I was keyed up and could have fought an army. But no one hooted. If they looked rather curiously at me, they said nothing.

As I opened the door to leave, on the steps stood my young lady. It is not often that a man opens a door and finds an angel on the step outside; but I did it that evening. I should not have been more surprised if I had found a real one. But if one believes that angels never visit men, these days, he should have seen Eleanor Leigh as she stood there. She did not appear at all surprised. Her eyes looked right into mine, and I took courage enough to look into hers for an instant. I have never forgotten them. They were like deep pools, clear and bottomless, filled with light. She did not look at all displeased and I did not envy St. Martin.

All she said was, "How do you do, Mr. Glave?" It was quite as if she expected to find me there—and she had. She had seen me stop little Janet and put the gloves on her. She was on her way to the house, and she had stopped and waited, and then had followed us. I did not know this until long afterward; but I asked her to let me wait and see her home, and so I did.

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That walk was a memorable one to me. The period of explanations was past. I dared harbor the hope that I was almost in sight of port. When I put her on the car, she was so good as to say her father would be glad to see me some time at their home, and I thought she spoke with just the least little shyness, which made me hope that she herself would not be sorry.

When I left her, I went to see my old drummer, and told him of the outrages which had been perpetrated on the poor woman. It was worth while seeing him. He was magnificent. As long as I was talking only of the man, he was merely acquiescent, uttering his "Ya, Ya," irresponsively over his beer; but when I told him of the woman and children, he was on his feet in an instant—"Tamming te strikers and all teir vorks." He seized his hat and big stick, and pouring out gutturals so fast that I could not pretend to follow him, ordered me to show him the place. As he strode through the streets, I could scarcely keep up with him. His stick rang on the frozen pavement like a challenge to battle. And when he reached the house he was immense. He was suddenly transformed. No mother could have been tenderer, no father more protecting. He gathered up the children in his great arms, and petted and

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soothed them; his tone, a little while before so ferocious, now as soft and gentle as the low velvet bass of his great drum. I always think of the Good Shepherd now as something like him that evening; rugged as a rock, gentle as a zephyr. He would have taken them all to his house and have adopted them if the woman would have let him. His heart was bigger than his house. He seemed to have filled all the place; to have made it a fortress.

The strike had cast its black cloud over all the section, and not all of its victims were murdered by the mob.

I fell in with the man who had spoken to me so cheerily one morning of the sun's shining for him. He looked haggard and ill and despairing. He was out of work and could find none. In our talk he did not justify the strike; but he bowed to it with resignation as a stricken Orestes might have bowed to the blows of Fate. His spirit was not then broken—it was only embittered. His furniture which was so nearly paid for had gone to the loan sharks; his house of which he boasted had reverted to the building company. He looked fully twenty years older than when I had seen him last. I offered him a small sum which he took gratefully. It was the first money he had had in

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weeks, he said, and the stores had stopped his credits. A few weeks later I saw him staggering along the street, his heart-eating sorrow drowned for an hour in the only nepenthe such poverty knows.

XXXVII

WOLFFERT'S NEIGHBORS

I HAD not been to visit Wolffert and, indeed, had but a hazy idea of where he lived, knowing only that he had a room in the house of some Jew in the Jewish quarter. Hitherto our meetings had taken place either in John Marvel's narrow little quarters or in mine at the old drummer's. But having learned from John that he was ill, I got the address from him, and one afternoon went over to see him. I found the place in a region more squalid than that in which John Marvel and I had our habitation and as foreign as if it had been in Judea or in a Black Sea province. In fact, it must have exhibited a mixture of both regions. The shops were small and some of them gay, but the gayest was as mean as the most sombre. The signs and notices were all in Yiddish or Russian, the former predominating, and as I passed through the ill-paved, ill-smelling, reeking streets I could scarcely retain my conviction that I was still in an American city. It was about the

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hour that the manufactories of clothing, etc., closed and the street through which I walked was filled with a moving mass of dark humanity that rolled through it like a dark and turgid flood. For blocks they filled the sidewalk, moving slowly on, and as I mingled in the mass, and caught low, guttural, unknown sounds, and not a word of English all the while, I became suddenly aware of a strange alien feeling of uncertainty and almost of oppression. Far as eye could see I could not descry one Saxon countenance or even one Teuton. They were all dark, sallow, dingy, and sombre. Now and then a woman's hat appeared in the level moving surge of round black hats, giving the impression of a bubble floating on a deep, slow current to melt into the flood. Could this, I reflected sombrely, be the element we are importing? and what effect would the strange confluence have on the current of our life in the future? No wonder we were in the throes of a strike vast enough to cause anxiety!

I was still under the dominion of this reflection when I reached the street in which Wolffert had his home, and, after some difficulty, discovered the house in which he had his abode.

The street was filled with wretched little shops, some more wretched than others, all stuck to-

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gether in a curious jumble of tawdry finery and rusty necessities. Among them were many shops where second-hand clothing was exhibited, or, from appearances, clothing for which that term was a flattering euphuism. I stopped at one where second-hand shoes were hung out, and, opening the door to ask the way, faced a stout, shapeless woman with a leathery skin and a hooked nose, above which a pair of inquisitive black eyes rested on me, roving alternately from my feet to my face, with an expression of mingled curiosity, alarm, and hostility. I asked her if she could tell me where the number I wanted was, and as my enquiry caused not the least change of expression, I took out my card and wrote the number down. She gazed at it in puzzled silence, and then with a little lighting of her dark face, muttered a few unintelligible words and bustled back to where a curtain hung across the narrow shop, and lifting one corner of it gave a call which I made out to be something like "Jacob." The next moment a small, keen-looking boy made his way from behind the curtain and gazed at me. A few words passed between the two, in a tongue unknown to me, and then the boy, laying down a book that he carried in his hand, came forward and asked me in perfectly good English, "What is it you want?"

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"I want to know where number 5260 $\frac{1}{2}$ —— Street is. I have that address, but cannot find the number."

"I'll show you." His eyes too were on my shoes. "The numbers of the streets were all taken down last year, and have not been put back yet. That is where Mr. Wolffert lives. Do you know him?"

"Yes, I am going to see him."

He turned and said something rapidly to his mother, in which the only word I recognized was Wolffert's name. The effect was instantaneous. The expression of vague anxiety died out of the woman's face and she came forward jabbering some sort of jargon and showing a set of yellow, scattering teeth.

"I'll show you where he lives. You come with me," said Jacob. "She thought you were an agent." He suddenly showed a much better set of teeth than his mother could display. "She don't speak English, you see." He had laid down his book on the counter and he now put on his cap. As he passed out of the door he paused and fastened his eyes on my feet. "You don't want a pair of shoes? We have all sorts—some as good as new. You can't tell. Half the price, too."

I declined the proffered bargain, and we walked

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up the street, Jacob discoursing volubly of many things, to show his superior intelligence.

"What was your book?" I enquired.

"U. S. History. I'm in the sixth grade."

"So? I should think you are rather small to be so high." My ideas of grades were rather hazy, having been derived from "Tom Brown at Rugby" and such like encyclopædias.

"Pah! I stand next to head," he cried contemptuously.

"You do! Who stands head?"

"Iky Walthierner—he's fourteen and I ain't but twelve. Then there is a fellow named Johnson—Jimmy Johnson. But he ain't nothin'!"

"He isn't? What's the matter with him?"

"He ain't got no eye on him—he don't never see nothin'."

"You mean he's dull?"

"Sure! Just mem'ry, that's all. He's dull. We beat 'em all."

"Who are 'we'?"

"We Jews."

"So——"

"Well, here we are. I'll run up and show you the door"—as we stopped at a little butcher shop beside which was a door that evidently led up a stair to the upper story.

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"All right. You know Mr. Wolffert?"

"Sure! We all know him. He's a Jew, too."

"Sure!" I tried to imitate his tone, for it was not an accent only.

He ran up the stair and on up a second flight and back along a dark, narrow little passage, where he tapped on a door, and, without waiting, walked in.

"Here's a man to see you."

"A gentleman, you mean," I said dryly, and followed him, for I have a particular aversion to being referred to to my face as a mere man. It is not a question of natural history, but of manners.

"Well, Jacob," said Wolffert when he had greeted me, "have you got to the top yet?"

"Will be next week," said Jacob confidently.

I found Wolffert sitting up in a chair, but looking wretchedly ill. He, however, declared himself much better. I learned afterward—though not from him—that he had caught some disease while investigating some wretched kennels known as "lodging houses," where colonies of Jews were packed like herrings in a barrel; and for which a larger percentage on the value was charged as rental than for the best dwellings in the city. His own little room was small and mean enough, but it was comfortably if plainly furnished, and

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there were books about, which always give a home-like air, and on a little table a large bunch of violets which instantly caught my eye. By some inexplicable sixth sense I divined that they had come from Eleanor Leigh; but I tried to be decent enough not to be jealous; and Wolffert's manifest pleasure at seeing me made me feel humble.

We had fallen to talking of his work when I said, "Wolffert, why do you live in this horrible quarter? No wonder you get ill. Why don't you get a room in a more decent part of the town—near where John Marvel lives, for instance?"

Wolffert smiled.

"Why?—what is the matter with this?"

"Oh! Why, it is dreadful. Why, it's the dirtiest, meanest, lowest quarter of the city! I never saw such a place. It's full of stinking"—I was going to say "Jews"; but reflected in time to substitute "holes."

Wolffert, I saw, supplied the omitted objection.

"Do you imagine I would live among the rich?" he demanded; "I thought you knew me better. I don't want to be fattened in the dark like a Strasbourg goose for my liver to make food acceptable to their jaded appetites. Better be a pig at once."

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"No, but there are other places than this—and I should think your soul would revolt at this—" I swung my arm in a half circle.

"Are they not my brethren?" he said, half smiling.

"Well, admit that they are—" (And I knew all along that this was the reason.) "There are other grades—brethren of nearer degree."

"None," he ejaculated. "'I dwell among my own people'—I must live among them to understand them."

"I should think them rather easy to understand."

"I mean to be in sympathy with them," he said gently. "Besides, I am trying to teach them two or three things."

"What?" For I confess that my soul had revolted at his surroundings. That surging, foreign-born, foreign-looking, foreign-spoken multitude who had filled the street as I came along through the vile reek of "Little Russia," as it was called, had smothered my charitable feelings.

"Well, for one thing, to learn the use of freedom—for another, to learn the proper method and function of organization."

"They certainly appear to me to have the latter already—simply by being what they are," I said lightly.

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"I mean of business organization," Wolffert explained. "I want to break up the sweat shop and the sweat system. We are already making some headway, and have thousands in various kinds of organized business which are quite successful."

"I should not think they would need your assistance—from what I saw. They appear to me to have an instinct."

"They have," said Wolffert, "but we are teaching them how to apply it. The difficulty is their ignorance and prejudice. You think that they hold you in some distrust and dislike, possibly?" As his tone implied a question, I nodded.

"Well, that is nothing to the way in which they regard me. You they distrust as a gentile, but me they detest as a renegade."

"Well, I must say that I think you deserve what you get for bringing in such a mass of ignorance. Now, you are an American, and a patriotic one. How do you reconcile it with your patriotism to introduce into the body politic such an element of ignorance, superstition, and unrest?"

"Why," said Wolffert, "you don't know our people. The Jew is often an element of ignorance and superstition, though he is not alone in this,

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but he is never an element of unrest—when he is justly treated,” he added after a pause. “But, whatever these people are in this generation, the next generation—the children of this generation—will be useful American citizens. All they require is a chance. Why, the children of these Russian Jews, baited from their own country, are winning all the prizes in the schools,” he added, his pale face flushing faintly. “That lad who showed you in is the son of parents who sell second-hand shoes in the next street and cannot speak a word of English, and yet he stands at the head of his class.”

“No, second!” I said.

“How do you know?”

“He told me.”

“The little rascal! See how proud he is of it,” said Wolffert triumphantly.

“He tried to sell me a pair of shoes.”

Wolffert chuckled. “Did he?” Then he sobered, catching my thought. “That is the most important thing for him at present, but wait. Let this develop.” He tapped his forehead. “He may give you laws equal to Kèpler’s or a new philosophy like Bacon’s. He may solve aerial navigation—or revolutionize thought in any direction—who knows?”

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His face had lighted up as he proceeded, and he was leaning forward in his chair, his eyes glowing.

"I know," I said, teasingly. "He'll sell shoes—second-hand ones polished up for new."

I was laughing, but Wolffert did not appreciate my joke. He flushed slightly.

"That's your gentile ignorance, my friend. That's the reason your people are so dense—they never learn—they keep repeating the same thing. No wonder we discover new worlds for you to claim!"

"What new worlds have you discovered?"

"Well, first, literature, next commerce. What is your oldest boasted scripture?"

"I thought you were talking of material worlds!"

"We helped about that, too—did our full part. You think Queen Isabella pawned her jewels to send Christobal Colon to discover America—don't you?"

I nodded.

"Well, the man who put up the money for that little expedition was a Jew—'Arcangel, the Treasurer.' You never heard of him!"

"Never."

"He did it all the same. If you would read

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something else beside your narrow English writings, Glave, you would learn something of the true history of civilization." Now and then Wolffert's arrogance, like Antipater's, showed through the rents in his raiment.

"What for instance? since you appear to know it all."

"Well, almost any other history or philosophy. Read the work of the thinkers, old and new, and see how much deeper life is than the shallow thing called by that divine name by the butterflies and insects and reptiles who flaunt their gauzy vans in our faces or fasten their brazen claws in our vitals. Meantime, you might read my book," he said with a smile, "when it comes out."

"Well, tell me about it meantime and save me the trouble. I sometimes prefer my friends to their books."

"You were always lazy," he said smiling. But he began to talk, laying down his philosophy of life, which was simple enough, though I could not follow him very far. I had been trained in too strict a school to accept doctrines so radical. And but that I saw him and John Marvel and Eleanor Leigh acting on them I should have esteemed them absolutely utopian. As it was, I wondered how far Eleanor Leigh had inspired his book.

XXXVIII

WOLFFERT'S PHILOSOPHY

(WHICH MAY BE SKIPPED BY THE READER)

AS Wolffert warmed up to his theme, his face brightened and his deep eyes glowed.

“The trouble with our people—our country—the world—is that our whole system—social—commercial—political—every activity is based on greed, mere, sheer greed. State and Church act on it—live by it. The success of the Jew which has brought on him so much suffering through the ages has revenged itself by stamping on your life the very evil with which you charge him—love of money. What ideals have we? None but money. We call it wealth. We have debased the name, and its debasement shows the debasement of the race. Once it meant weal, now mere riches, though employed basely, the very enemy and assassin of weal. The covetousness, whose reprobation in the last of the commandments was intended as a compendium to embrace the whole,

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has honeycombed our whole life, public and private. The amassing of riches, not for use only, for display—vulgar beyond belief—the squandering of riches, not for good, but for evil, to gratify jaded appetites which never at their freshest craved anything but evil or folly, marks the lowest level of the shopkeeping intellect. The Argands and the Canters are the aristocrats of the community, and the Capons are the fit priests for such people.”

He turned away in disgust—but I prodded him.

“What is your remedy? You criticise fiercely, but give no light. You are simply destructive.”

“The remedy is more difficult to give,” he said gravely; “because the evil has been going on so long that it has become deep-rooted. It has sunk its roots into, not only the core of our life, but our character. It will take long to eradicate it. But one economic evil might be, and eventually must be changed, unless we wish to go down into the abyss of universal corruption and destruction.”

“You mean——?”

“Capitalism—the idea that because a man is accidentally able to acquire through adventitious and often corrupt means vast riches which really are not made by himself, but by means of others under conditions and laws which he did not create,

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he may call them his own; use them in ways manifestly detrimental to the public good and, indeed, often in notorious destructiveness of it, and be protected in doing so by those laws."

"'Accidentally'—and 'adventitious means'! That does not happen so often. It may happen by finding a gold mine—once in ten thousand times—or by cornering some commodity on the Stock or Produce Exchange once in one hundred thousand times, but even then a man must have intellect—force—courage—resourcefulness—wonderful powers of organization."

"So have the burglar and highwayman," he interrupted.

"But they are criminals—they break the law."

"What law? Why law more than these others? Is not the fundamental law, not to do evil to others?"

"The law established by society for its protection."

"Who made those laws?"

"The people—through their representatives," I added hastily as I saw him preparing to combat it.

"The people, indeed! precious little part they have had in the making of the laws. Those laws were made, not by the people—who had no voice

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in their making, but by a small class—originally the chief—the emperor—the king—the barons—the rich burghers. The people had no part nor voice.”

“They received the benefit of them.”

“Only the crumbs which fell from their masters’ tables. They got the gibbet, the dungeon, the rack, and the stick.”

“Wolffert, you would destroy all property rights.”

“My dear fellow, what nonsense you talk. I am only for changing the law to secure property rights for all, instead of for a class, the necessity for which no longer exists, if it ever did exist.”

“Your own law-giver recognized it and inculcated it.” I thought this a good thrust. He waved it aside.

“That was for a primitive people in a primitive age, as your laws were for your people in their primitive age. But do you suppose that Moses would make no modification now?”

“I have no idea that he would. For I believe they were divine.”

“Surely—Moses acted under the guidance of the great Jehovah, whose law is justice and equity and righteousness. The laws he gave were to inculcate this, and they served their purpose when

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Israel served God. But now when he is mocked, the letter of the law is made an excuse and is given as the command to work injustice and inequity and unrighteousness. Surely they should be, at least, interpreted in the spirit in which they were given. You claim to be a Christian?"

"A very poor one."

"In name, at least, you claim that there has been a new dispensation?"

"Yes—an amplification—a development and evolution."

"Precisely. In place of an 'eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—the other cheek turned—to do to others as you would have them do to you!'"

"That is the ideal. I have not yet reached that degree of—" I paused for the word.

"I, too, acknowledge that evolution, that ideal. Why should we not act on it?"

"Because of human nature. We have not yet reached the stage when it can be practically applied."

"But human nature while it does not change basically may be regulated, developed, uplifted, and this teaching is based on this principle. It has not yet borne much apparent fruit, it is true; but it is sound, nevertheless. We both in our

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better moments, at least, feel it to be sound, and there has been a little, however little, uplift, and however hard to maintain.

“You believe in the development of man; but you look only to his material development. I look for his complete development, material and spiritual. As he has advanced through the countless ages since God breathed into him the breath of life, and by leading him along the lines of physical development to a station in creation where the physical evolution gave place to the ever-growing psychical development; so I believe he is destined to continue this psychical or spiritual growth, increasing its power as the ages pass and mounting higher and higher in spiritual knowledge, until he shall attain a degree of perfection that we only think of now as a part of the divine. We see the poet and the saint living to-day in an atmosphere wholly distinct from the gross materialism of common humanity. We see laws being enacted and principles evolved which make for the improvement of the human race. We see the gradual uplifting and improvement of the race. War is being diminished; its horrors lessened; food is becoming more diffused; civilization—material civilization—is being extended; and the universal, fundamental rights are being

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a little more recognized, however dimly. This means growth—the gradual uplifting of mankind, the diffusion of knowledge, as well as of food—the growth of intellectuality. And as this comes, think you that man will not rise higher? A great reservoir is being tapped and from it will flow, in the future, rich streams to fertilize the whole world of humanity. Aspirations will leap higher and higher, and the whole race in time will receive new light, new power, new environments, with an ever-widening horizon, and a vast infinitude of spiritual truth as the field for the soul's exercise."

"It is a dream," I said, impressed by his burning eyes, his glowing face, as he drifted on almost in a rhapsody.

"Yes—a dream; but it might come true if all—if you and all like you—I mean all educated and trained people, would unite to bring it about. Your leader preached it, you profess the principles now, but do not practise them. The State has been against it—the Church equally. It is full of sham."

"It was Jerusalem that stoned the prophets," I interrupted. He swept on with a gesture.

"Yes, yes—I know—I am not speaking now as a sectarian."

"But, at least, as a Jew," I said, laughing.

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"Yes, perhaps. I hardly know. I know about Hannan the High Priest. He tried to stand in with Pilate. He thought he was doing his duty when he was only fighting for his caste. But what an Iliad of woes he brought on his people—through the ages. But now they know, they profess, and yet stone the prophets. Your church, founded to fight riches and selfishness and formalism, is the greatest exploiter of all that the world knows. Two generations sanctify the wealth gotten by the foulest means. The robber, the murderer, the destroyer of homes are all accepted, and if one protests he is stoned to-day as if he were a blasphemer of the law. If the Master to whom your churches are erected should come to-day and preach the doctrines he preached in Judea nineteen hundred years ago, he would be cast out here precisely as he was cast out there." He spoke almost fiercely.

"Yet his teachings," he added, "are nearer those of the people I represent than of those who assail them. Why should we not act on it? Possibly, some others might see our good works, and in any event we shall have done our part. John Marvel does."

"I know he does, but he is a better Christnia than I am, and so are you."

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"I am not a Christian at all. I am only a Jew."

"Will you say that his teachings have had no part in forming your character and life?"

"Not my character. My father taught me before I was able to read. Possibly I have extended his teachings!"

"Have his teachings had no part in deciding you as to your work?"

"His teachings? John Marvel's exposition of them in his life bore a part and, thus, perhaps——"

"That is it."

"Why should I not participate in the benefit of the wisdom of a Jewish rabbi?" said Wolffert, scornfully. "Did Jesus utter his divine philosophy only for you who were then savages in northern Europe or half-civilized people in Greece, Italy, and Spain? Your claim that he did so simply evinces the incurable insularity of your people."

"What is your remedy? Socialism?"

"Call it what you will. That is a name which some prefer and some detest. The fact is, that the profit system on which all modern capitalism rests is radically and fundamentally vicious and wrong. Men work and strive, not to produce for use, for service, but for profit. Profit becomes

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the aim of human endeavor—nothing higher or better—competition.”

“‘Competition,’” I quoted, “‘is the soul of trade.’”

“Competition,” he said, “may be the soul of trade, but that trade is the trade in men’s souls, as well as bodies—in the universal soul of the people. It sets man against man, and brother against brother—Cain against Abel—and is branded with the curse of Cain.”

“What would you substitute for it?” I demanded.

“The remedy is always a problem. I should try co-operation—in this age.”

“Co-operation! It has been proved an absolute failure. It makes the industrious and the thrifty the slave of the idle and spendthrift. Men would not work.”

“An idle and time-worn fallacy. The ambitious do not work for gold, the high-minded do not—John Marvel does not—Miss Leigh does not. The poor do not work for wealth, only for bread, for a crust, with starvation ever grinning at them beside their door which cannot shut out its grisly face. Look at your poor client McNeil. Did he work to accumulate gold? He worked to feed his starving children.”

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"But, would they work—this great class?"

"Yes, they would have to work, all who are capable of it, but for higher rewards. We would make all who are capable, work. We would give the rewards to those who produce, to all who produce by intellect or labor. We would do away with those who live on the producers—the leeches who suck the life-blood. Work, intellectual or physical, should be the law of society."

"They would not work," I insisted.

"Why do you go on drivelling that like a morning paper? Why would they not work? Man is the most industrious animal on earth. Look at these vast piles of useless buildings, look at the great edifices and works of antiquity. Work is the law of his awakened intellect. There would still be ambition, emulation, a higher and nobler ambition for something better than the base reward they strive and rob and trample each other in the mire for now. Men would then work for art, the old mechanic arts would revive in greater beauty and perfection than ever before. New and loftier ideals would be set up. There would be more, vastly more men who would have those ideals. What does the worker now know of ideals? He is reduced to a machine, and a very poor machine at that. He does not know where his work goes,

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or have an interest in it. Give him that. Give his fellows that. It will uplift him, uplift his class, create a great reservoir from which to draw a better class. The trouble with you, my dear friend," said Wolffert, "is that you are assuming all the time that your law is a fixed law, your condition of society a fixed condition. They are not: there are few things fixed in the world. The universal law is change—growth or decay. Of all the constellations and stars, the Pole star alone is fixed, and that simply appears so. It really moves like the rest, only in a vaster orbit with other stars moving about it."

I smiled, partly at his grandiose imagery and partly at his earnestness.

"You smile, but it is true. There are few fundamental laws. The survival of the fittest is one of them in its larger sense. It is that under which my people have survived."

"And that all men are by nature entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

"Not at all, or, at least, only in the larger sense. If they were entitled to life, neither nature nor the law would deprive them of it—if to liberty, neither could interfere with it—if to the pursuit of happiness, we should have to reconstruct their minds."

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"Then, in Heaven's name, what are they entitled to?" I exclaimed.

"First, under certain conditions, to the best fruits of properly organized society; to light—enlightenment; then to opportunity to have an equal chance for what they are willing to work for."

"Among other things, to work?" I hazarded, feeling that he had delivered himself into my hands. "Every man has a right to labor at whatever work and for whatever prices he pleases," I said; "that you will admit is fundamental."

"Provided you allow me to define what you mean—provided it does not injure his neighbor. You, as a lawyer, quote your *Sic utere tuo ut non.*"

"If the laborer and his employer contract, no one else has a right to interfere."

"Not the public—if they are injured by it?"

"Except by law."

"Who make the laws? The people in theory now, and some day they will do it in fact. As the spirit of the time changes, the interpretation of the law will change, and the spirit is changing all the time."

"Not in this particular."

"Yes, in all respects. Men are becoming more enlightened. The veil has been torn away and the

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light has been let in. As soon as education came the step was taken. We are in a new era already, and the truth is, you and your like do not see it."

"What sort of era? How is it new?"

"An era of enlightenment. Men have been informed; they know their power; 'the tree of knowledge has been plucked.'"

"They don't appear to do much with the knowledge."

"You think not? It is true that they have not yet learned to apply the knowledge fully, but they are learning. See how democracy has ripened over the earth, overthrowing tyranny and opening the door of opportunity for all mankind—how the principles of socialism have spread within the last generation, in Germany, in England, now in America and Russia. Why, it is now an active, practical force."

"Oh! not much," I insisted.

"A great deal, taking into account the opposition to it. It is contrary, remember, to the established usage and belief of thousands of years. It proposes to supplant what you have been trained to consider the foundation of your life, of society, of order, and you have been trained to believe that your most precious rights are bound up with that system. Every force of modern life is ar-

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rayed against it, yet it advances steadily; because, under your system, lies the fundamental error and sin which enables one man to hold another down and live off of him. You do not see that a new era is dawning, that man is developing, society passing into a new phase. Democracy has come to stay; because it is informed. More and more men are thinking, more and more men are learning to think."

"But they will not be able to upset the established order."

"There is no established order. It is always upset in time, either for good or ill. It never abides, for change is the law."

"Generally for ill. Content is lost."

"Generally for good," flashed Wolffert. "The content you speak of is slavery—stagnation and death. When a man ceases to move, to change consciously, he changes most, he dies. That is the law that for the universal good underlies all growth. You cannot alter it."

He ceased speaking and I took my leave, feeling that somehow he had grown away from me.

XXXIX

THE CONFLICT

WOLFFERT'S book was never finished. When he got well, it was laid aside for more imperative work. The misery in the city had increased till it threatened the overthrow of everything. It was necessary to do his part to ameliorate the wretchedness; for his word was a charm in the foreign district where disturbance was most to be feared. He was the most talked of man in the city. He worked night and day.

For a little time it looked as though the efforts of the peacemakers, among whom were conspicuous in the poor section of the town John Marvel and Wolffert, to bring about a better feeling and condition were going to be successful. The men began to return to work. The cars were once more being operated, though under heavy police protection, Collis McSheen having had it made clear to him by his former friends like Canter and others that he must act or take the consequences.

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One evening not long afterward, under prompting of an impulse to go and see how my poor woman and little Janet were coming on, and possibly not without some thought of Eleanor Leigh, who had hallowed her doorstep the last time I was there, I walked over to that part of the town. I took Dix along, or he took himself, for he was my inseparable companion these days. Eleanor Leigh had been there, but she had gone to the old drummer's to see Elsa, who was ill, and had taken Janet with her. The mother said the child was afraid to go out on the street now, and Miss Eleanor thought it would do her good. The poor woman's pitiful face haunted me as I turned down the street. Though the men were returning to work, the effect of the strike was still apparent all through this section of the town. The streets were full of idlers, especially about the bar-rooms; and their surly looks and glum air testified to the general feeling.

Of all the gatherings of men that I have ever seen the most painful is that of men on a strike. They are a forlorn hope. In most assemblies there is enthusiasm, spirit, resolve: something that beams forth with hope and sustains. Most of these exist in striking men; yet hope is absent. In other assemblages her radiant wings light up

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their faces; in strikes, it seems to me that the sombre shadow of care is always present. In this strike Wolffert had been one of the most interested observers. While he thought it unwise to strike, he advocated the men's right to strike and to picket, but not to employ violence. It was passive resistance that he preached, and he deplored the death of McNeil as much as I did, or John Marvel. Only he charged it to McSheen and Wringman and even more to the hypocrisy of a society which tolerated their operations.

This strike had succeeded to the extent of causing great loss to and, rumor said, of financially embarrassing Mr. Leigh; but had failed so far as the men were concerned, and it was known that it had failed. Its only fruit for the working people was misery. The only persons who had profited by it were men like McSheen and Wringman.

I held strong opinions about the rights of men in the abstract; under the influence of John Marvel's and Wolffert's unselfish lives, and the yet more potent influence of Eleanor Leigh, I had come to realize the beauty of self-sacrifice, even if I had not yet risen to the loftiness of its practice; but the difficulties which I saw in the application of our theories and my experience that night at the meeting, followed by the death of

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McNeil, had divided me from my old associates like Wolffert. I could not but see that out of the movements instituted, as Wolffert believed, for the general good of the working classes, the real workingmen were become mere tools, and those who were glib of tongue, forward in speech, and selfish and shrewd in method, like McSheen and Wringman, used them and profited by them remorselessly, while the rest of the community were ground between the upper and the nether millstones. Even Wolffert, with his pure motives, had proved but an instrument in their hands to further their designs. Their influence was still at work, and under orders from these battenning politicians many poor men with families still stood idle, with aims often as unselfish and as lofty as ever actuated patriots or martyrs, enduring hardship and privation with the truest and most heroic courage; whilst their leaders, like Wringman, who had been idle agitators during the time of prosperity, now rose on the crest of the commotion they had created, and blossomed into importance. The Nile courses through upper Egypt bearing its flood to enrich the lower lands; but the desert creeps and hangs its parched lips over the very brink.

I determined to go and enquire after Elsa my-

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self. So, with Dix at my heel, I passed through the foreign streets, crowded with the same dark-hued elements I had observed before, only now lowering and threatening as a cloud about to break, and walked over toward the little street in which the Loewens lived, and presently I fell in with Wolffert, who, like myself, appeared to have business in that direction. Under the circumstances, I should have been glad to escape from him; but as he joined me I could not well do so, and we walked along together. He looked worn and appeared to be rather gloomy, which I set down to his disappointment at the turn affairs connected with the strike had taken, for I learned from him that, under the influence of Wringman, there was danger of a renewal of hostilities; that his efforts at mediation had failed, and he had at a meeting which he had attended, where he had advocated conciliatory measures, been hooted down. There was danger, he said, of the whole trouble breaking out again, and if so, the sympathy of the public would now be on the other side. Thinking more of the girl I was in pursuit of than of anything else, and having in mind the announcement of Mr. Leigh's losses and reported embarrassment, I expressed myself hotly. If they struck again they deserved all they got—they

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deserved to fail for following such leaders as Wringman and refusing to listen to their friends.

"Oh, no, they are just ignorant, that is all—they don't know. Give them time—give them time."

"Well, I am tired of it all."

"Tired! Oh! don't get tired. That's not the way to work. Stand fast. Go and see John Marvel and get new inspiration from him. See how he works."

"Wolffert, I am in love," I said, suddenly. He smiled—as I remembered afterward, sadly.

"Yes, you are." There was that in his tone which rather miffed me. I thought he was in love, too; but not, like myself, desperately.

"You are not—and you don't know what it is. So, it is easy for you."

He turned on me almost savagely, with a flame in his eyes.

"Not—! I not! You don't dream what it is to be in love. You cannot. You are incapable—incapable!" He clutched at his heart. The whole truth swept over me like a flood.

"Wolffert! Why—? Why have you never—?" I could not go on. But he understood me.

"Because I am a Jew!" His eyes burned with deep fires.

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“A Jew! Well, suppose you are. She is not one to allow that——”

He wheeled on me.

“Do you think—? Do you imagine I mean—? I would not allow myself—I could never—never allow myself— It is impossible—for me.”

I gazed on him with amazement. He was transformed. The pride of race, the agony and subdued fury of centuries, flamed in him. I saw for the first time the spirit of the chosen people: Israel in bondage, yet arisen, with power to call down thunders from Heaven. I stood abashed—abashed at my selfish blindness through all my association with him. How often I had heedlessly driven the iron into his soul. With my arm over his shoulder I stammered something of my remorse, and he suddenly seized my hand and wrung it in speechless friendship.

As we turned into a street not far from the Loewens', we found ahead of us quite a gathering, and it was increasing momentarily. Blue-coated police, grim-looking or anxious, were standing about in squads, and surlier-looking men were assembling at the corners. It was a strike. I was surprised. I even doubted if it could be that. But my doubt was soon dispelled. At that moment a car came around a corner a few blocks

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away and turned into the street toward us. There was a movement in a group near me; a shout went up from one of them and in a second the street was pandemonium. That dark throng through which we had passed poured in like a torrent. A bomb exploded a half block away, throwing up dirt and stones.

With a cry, "God of Israel!" Wolffert sprang forward; but I lost him in the throng. I found myself borne toward the car like a chip on a fierce flood. The next instant I was a part of the current, and was struggling like a demon. On the platform were a brawny driver and two policemen. The motorman I recognized as Otto. As I was borne near the car, I saw that in it, among others, were an old man, a woman, and a child, and as I reached the car I recognized—I know not how—all three. They were the old drummer, Eleanor Leigh, and the little girl, Janet McNeil. I thought I caught the eye of the young lady, but it may have been fancy; for the air was full of missiles, the glass was crashing and tingling; the sound of the mob was deafening. At any rate I saw her plainly. She had gathered up the scared child in her arms, and with white face, but blazing eyes, was shielding her from the flying stones and glass.

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I was one of the first men on the car, and made my way into it, throwing men right and left as I entered it. I shall never forget the look that came into her eyes as she saw me. She rose with a cry and, stretching out her hands, pushed the child into my arms with a single word: "Save her." It was like an elixir; it gave me ten times the strength I had before. The car was blocked, and we descended from it—I in front protecting her—and fought our way through the mob to the outskirts, the old drummer, a squad of policemen, and myself; I with the child by the hand to keep her near the ground and less exposed, and the old drummer shielding us both and roaring like a lion. It was a warm ten minutes; the air was black with stones and missiles. The crowd seemed to have gone mad and were like ravening wolves. The presence of a woman and child had no effect on them but to increase their fury. They were mad with the insanity of mobbism. But at last we got through, though I was torn and bleeding. They were after the motorman and conductor. The latter had escaped into a shop and the door was shut; but the mob was not to be balked. Doors and windows were smashed in like paper. The mob poured in and rummaged everywhere for its victim, up-stairs and down,

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like terriers in a cellar after a rat. Fortunately for him, he had escaped out the back way. They looted the shop and then turned back to search for another victim. As we were near old Loewen's house we took the refugees there, and when they were in that place of safety, I returned to the scene of conflict. I had caught sight of several faces in the crowd that roused me beyond measure, and I went back to fight. If I had had a pistol that day, I should certainly have committed murder. I had seen Wringman covertly urging the mob on and Pushkin enjoying it. Just as I stepped from the car with the child, trying to shield her and Eleanor Leigh, and with the old drummer bulky and raging at my side, trying to shield us all and sputtering oaths in two languages, my eye reached across the mob and I had caught sight of McSheen's and Pushkin's heads above the crowd on the far edge of the mob where it was safe. McSheen wore his impervious mask; the other's face was wicked with satisfaction, and he was laughing. A sudden desire to kill sprang into my heart. If I had not had my charges to guard, I should have made my way to him then. I came back for him now.

When I arrived the fight had somewhat changed. Shops were being looted, wagons, trucks, and every

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sort of vehicle were being turned into the street by drivers who sympathized with the strike, to impede the restoration of order. The police, aroused at last and in deadly earnest, had formed in order and, under their hammering, the mob was giving way. Only at one point they were making a stand. It was the corner where Pushkin had stood, and I made toward it. As I did so the crowd opened, and a group stamped itself indelibly in my mind. In the front line of the mob, Wolffert, tall and flaming, hatless, and with flying hair, swinging arms, and wide-open mouth, by turns trying to pacify the wild mob, by turns cursing and fighting a group of policemen—who, with flying clubs and drawn pistols, were hammering them and driving them slowly—was trying to make himself heard. Beyond these, away at the far edge of the mob the face of Pushkin, his silk hat pulled over his eyes. As I gazed at him, he became deadly pale, and then turned as if to get away; but the crowd held him fast. I was making toward him, when a figure taller than his shoved in between us, pushing his way toward him. He was fighting for his life. His head was bare and his face was bleeding. His back was to me; but I recognized the head and broad shoulders of Otto. It was this sight that drove

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the blood from Pushkin's face, and well it might; for the throng was being parted by the young Swede as water is parted by a strong swimmer. There was a pistol shot, then I saw the Swede's arm lifted with the lever in his hand, and the next second Pushkin's head went down. The cry that went up and the surging of the crowd told me what had happened, but I had no time to act; for at this moment I saw a half-dozen men in the mob fall upon Wolffert, who with bleeding face was still trying to hold them back, and he disappeared in the rush. I shouted to some officers by me, "They are killing a man there," and together we made our way through the crowd toward the spot. It was as I supposed—the adventurer was down. The young Swede had settled his account with him. He was unconscious, but he was still breathing. Wolffert, too, was stretched on the ground, battered almost beyond recognition. John Marvel, his own face bruised and bleeding, was on his knees beside him, supporting his head, and the police were beating the crowd back. As I drew near, Wolffert half rose. "Don't beat them; they don't know." He sank back. The brawny young Swede, with a pistol bullet through his clothes, was already on the other side of the street, making his way out through the crowd. Push-

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kin's and Wolffert's fall and the tremendous rush made by the police caused the mob to give way finally, and they were driven from the spot, leaving a half-dozen hatless and drunken leaders in the hands of the police.

Pushkin was taken up and was carried to a hospital, and John Marvel lifted Wolffert in his arms. Just as he was lifted, a stone struck me on the head, and I went down and knew no more.

When I came to, I was in a hospital. John Marvel was sitting beside me, his placid eyes looking down into mine with that mingled serenity and kindness which gave such strength to others. I think they helped me to live as they had helped so many other poor sufferers to die. I was conscious only for a moment, and then went off into an illness which lasted a long time before I really knew anything. But I took him with me into that misty border-land where I wandered so many weeks, before returning to life, and when I emerged from it again, there he sat as before, serene, confident, and inspiring. He wore a mourning band on his sleeve.

"Where is Dix?" was the first thing I asked.

"He is all right—in good hands."

It was a long time before I could be talked to much; but when I was strong enough, he told me

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many things that had taken place. The strike was broken up. Its end was sad enough, as the end of all strikes is. Wolffert was dead—killed in the final rush of the riot in which I was hurt. And so perished all his high aims and inefficient, unselfish methods. His father had come on and taken his body home: "A remarkable old man," said John. "He was proud of Leo, but could not get over the loss of the great merchant he would have been." Pushkin had recovered, and had been discharged from the hospital, and had just married Collis McSheen's daughter. "She would have him," said John. Wringman had disappeared. On the collapse of the strike, it had been found that he had sold out to Coll McSheen and the Argand companies, and furnished them information. He had now gone away, Marvel did not know where. Langton, when I saw him later, thought he had been afraid to stay longer where so many men were who had lost their places through him.

"It is always the way—the innocent suffer, and the guilty escape," I murmured.

I felt Marvel's hand gently placed over my lips.

"Inscrutable; but it must be right," he said:

" ' God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.' "

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"I don't believe God had anything to do with it." I was bitter; for I was still thinking of Wolfert and Pushkin and McSheen.

"The doctors tell me that a hundredth part of an inch more, and a friend of mine would never have known anything again," said Marvel, gravely, looking down at me with sorrowful, kind eyes.

Under this argument *ad hominem* I was silent, if not convinced. We are always ready to think Providence interferes in our especial behalf.

I started to ask after another who had been in the riot, but I could not frame the question. I saw that Marvel knew what I wished. I learned afterward that I had talked of her constantly during my delirium. She was well, he told me. She had not been hurt, nor had the child or old Loewen. She had left the city. Her father was involved now in a great lawsuit, the object of which Marvel did not know, and she had gone away.

"Where has she gone?"

He did not answer, and I took it for granted that he did not know.

"If I had been you, I would have found out where she went to," I said peevishly.

He took no notice of this. He only smiled. He did not say so; but I thought from his manner that she had gone abroad. He had had a note

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from her saying that she would be away a long time, and inclosing him a generous contribution for his poor.

"She is an angel," he said.

"Of course she is."

Though he spoke reverently, I was almost angry with him for thinking it necessary to say it at all.

"Yes; but you do not know how good she is. None but God knows how good some women are."

One or two other pieces of news he told me. The old drummer and his wife had gone off, too; but only on a visit to Elsa. Elsa and Otto had been married, and were living in another State. I saw that he still had something else to tell, and finally it came out. As soon as I was able, I must go away for a while. I needed change and rest, and he knew the very place for me, away off in the country.

"You appear to be anxious to depopulate the city," I said. He only smiled contentedly.

"I am going to send you to the country," he said with calm decision.

"I have to work——"

"When you come back. I have made all the arrangements."

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"I am going to find Eleanor Leigh. I will find her if the world holds her."

"Yes, to be sure," he smiled indulgently. He was so strong that I yielded.

I learned that a good offer was waiting for me to go into the law office of one of the large firms when I should be well enough to work, in a capacity which Jeams would have termed that of a "minor connectee"; but it was coupled with the condition that I should get well first. My speech at the meeting when I denounced Wringman, and my part in the riots, had become known, and friends had interested themselves in my behalf. So John Marvel reported; and as he appeared to be managing things, I assumed that he had done this, too.

I never fully knew until after his death how truly Wolffert was one of the Prophets. I often think of him with his high aim to better the whole human race, inspired by a passion for his own people to extend his ministration to all mankind, cast out by those he labored for; denying that he was a Christian, and yet dying a Christian death in the act of supplicating for those who slew him. I owe him a great debt for teaching me many things, but chiefly for the knowledge that the future of the race rests on the whole people and its process depends on each one, however he may

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love his own, working to the death for all. He opened my eyes to the fact that every man who contributes to the common good of mankind is one of the chosen people and that the fundamental law is to do good to mankind.

I discovered that John Marvel knew he was in love with Eleanor Leigh, though how he knew it I never learned. "He never told her," he said, "but died with it locked in his heart—as was best," he added after a pause, and then he looked out of the window, and as he did not say anything from which I could judge whether he knew why Wolfert never told his love, I did not tell what I knew. It may have been the slowly fading light which made his face so sad. I remember that a long silence fell between us, and it came over me with a new force how much more unselfishly both these men had loved than I and how much nobler both had always been—the living and the dead. And I began battling with myself to say something which I felt I ought to say, but had not courage enough.

Presently John said very slowly, almost as if he were speaking to himself, "I believe if you keep on, she will marry you, and I believe you will help each other—I know she will help you." His arm was resting on the table.

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I leaned over and laid my hand on his arm.

"I once thought it certain I should win her. I am far from sure that I shall now. I am not worthy of her—but I shall try to be. You alone, John, of all the men I know, are. I cannot give her up—but it is only honest to tell you that I have less hope than I had."

He turned to me with a sad little smile on his face and shook his head.

"I would not give her up if I were you. You are not good enough for her, but no one is, and you will grow better."

For the first time, I almost thought him handsome.

"You are, old man."

"Me! Oh! no, I am not—I have my work to do—it is useless to talk to me—you keep on."

He picked up a paper and began to read, and I observed for the first time that he had taken off his glasses. I made some remark on it.

"Yes, my sight is getting better—I can see the stars now," he said, smiling.

"Ah! John, you have long seen the stars," I said.

So, as soon as I could travel, John Marvel sent me off—sent me to a farmhouse where he had lived in his first parish—a place far from the rail-

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roads; a country of woods and rolling fields and running streams; the real country where blossoms whiten and birds sing and waters murmur.

"They are the best people in the world," he said; and they were. They accepted me on his word. "Mr. Marvel had sent me, and that was enough." His word was a talisman in all that region. They did not know who the Queen of England was, and were scarcely sure as to the President of the United States; but they knew John Marvel. And because I had come from him they treated me like a prince. And this was the man I had had the folly to look down on!

In that quiet place I seemed to have reached content. In that land of peace the strife of the city, the noise and turmoil and horror of the strike, seemed but as the rumble of waves breaking on some far-off shore. I began to quaff new life with the first breath of the balmy air.

The day after I arrived I borrowed the skiff that belonged to my host and paddled down the little river that skirted his place, with the idea of fishing in a pool he had told me of.

The afternoon was so soft and balmy that I forgot my sport and simply drifted with the current under the overhanging branches of willows and sycamores, when, turning a bend in the

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stream, I came on a boat floating in a placid pool. In it were a young lady and a little girl, and who but Dix, his brindled head held high, his twisted ears pointed straight up-stream, and his whole body writhing and quivering with excitement. It was a moment before I could quite take it in, and I felt for a second as if I were dreaming.

Yet there was Eleanor Leigh under the willows, her small white hand resting on the side of the boat, her face lovelier than ever, and her voice making music in my ears with those low, sincere tones that I had never forgotten, and which made it the most beautiful in the world. I must have carried my soul in my eyes that moment; for the color sprang to her cheeks and I saw a look in hers I had never seen there before.

"Well, this is Fate," I said, as the current bore my boat against hers and it lay locked against it in that limpid pool.

"Would Mr. Marvel have called it so?" she asked, her eyes resting upon me with a softer look in them than they had ever given me.

"No, he would have said Providence."

I am sure it was on that stream that Halcyone found retreat. In that sweet air, freed from any anxieties except to please her whose pleasure had become the sun of my life, I drank in health day

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by day and hour by hour. My farmhouse was only a half-mile or so across the fields to the home of Eleanor Leigh's old cousins with whom she was staying, and only the sidereal travellers followed that path so regularly as I. It was the same place where she had first met John Marvel—and Wolfert. She was even interested in my law, and actually listened with intelligence to the succulent details of livery of seisin, and other ancient conveyancing. Not that she yet consented to marry me. This was a theme she had a genius for evading. However, I knew I should win her. Only one thing troubled me. As often as I touched on my future plans and spoke of the happiness I should have in relieving her of the drudgery of a teacher's life, she used to smile and contest it. It was one of the happinesses of her life, she said, to teach that school. But for it, I would never have "put out her fire for her that morning." Was ever such ingratitude? Of course, I would not admit this. "Fate—no, Providence was on my side." And I took out my violets and showed them to her, telling her their history. They still retained a faint fragrance. And the smile she gave was enough to make them fresh again. But I, too, was friendly to the school. How could I be otherwise? For she told me one day that the



I am sure it was on that stream that Halcyone found retreat.

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first time she liked me was when I was sitting by the cab-driver holding the little dirty child in my arms, with Dix between my feet. And I had been ashamed to be seen by her! I only feared that she might take it into her head still to keep the school. And I now knew that what she took into her little head to be her duty she would perform. "By the way, you might take lessons in making up the fire," she suggested.

I received quite a shock a few days later when I found in my mail a letter from the Miss Tipples, telling me of their delight on learning of my recovery, and mentioning incidentally the fact, which they felt sure I would be glad to know, that they had settled all of their affairs in a manner entirely satisfactory to them, as Mr. McSheen had very generously come forward at a time when it was supposed that I was fatally injured, and had offered to make reparation to them and pay out of his own pocket not only all of the expenses which they had incurred about the matter, but had actually paid them three thousand dollars over and above these expenses, a munificent sum, which had enabled them to pay dear Mrs. Kale all they owed her. They felt sure that I would approve of the settlement, because Mr. McSheen's

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intermediary had been "a life-long friend of mine and in some sort," he said, "my former law partner, as we had lived for years in adjoining offices." They had signed all the papers he had presented and were glad to know that he was entirely satisfied, and now they hoped that I would let them know what they owed me, in order that they might settle at least that part of their debt; but for the rest, they would always owe me a debt of undying gratitude, and they prayed God for my speedy recovery and unending happiness, and they felt sure Mr. Peck would rejoice also to know that I was doing so well.

Peck! And he had charged them a fee for his services!

It was now approaching the autumn and I was chafing to get back to work. I knew now that success was before me. It might be a long road; but I was on it.

John Marvel, in reply to an enquiry, wrote that the place was still waiting for me in the office he had mentioned, though he did not state what it was.

"How stupid he is!" I complained. Eleanor Leigh only laughed.

She "did not think him stupid at all, and certainly she did not think I should do so. In fact,

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she considered him one of the most sensible men she ever knew."

"Why, he could not have done more to keep me in ignorance if he had tried," I fumed. And she only laughed the more.

"I believe you are jealous of him." Her eyes were dancing in an exasperating way they had. I was consumed with jealousy of everybody; but I would never admit it.

"Jealous of John Marvel! Nonsense! But I believe you were in—you liked him very much."

"I did," she nodded cheerily. "I do—more than any one I ever knew—almost." And she launched out in a eulogy of John which quite set me on fire.

"Then why did you not marry him?" I was conscious that my head went up and my wrath was rising.

"He never asked me." Her dancing eyes still playing hide and seek with mine.

"I supposed there was some good reason," I said loftily. She vouchsafed no answer—only went on making a chain of daisies, while her dimples came and went, and I went on to make a further fool of myself. I was soon haled up and found myself in that outer darkness where the cheerful occupation is gnashing of teeth. Like the foolish

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glass merchant, I had smashed all my hopes. I walked home through the Vale of Bitterness.

That evening, after spending some hours in trying to devise a plan by which I could evade the humiliation of an absolute surrender, and get back without crawling too basely, I went over to say what I called—good-by. I was alone, for Dix had abandoned me for her, and I did not blame him even now. It was just dusk; but it seemed to me midnight. I had never known the fields so dark. As I turned into a path through the orchard where I had had so many happy hours, I discovered her sitting on the ground beneath a tree with Dix beside her; but as I approached she rose and leaned against the tree, her dryad eyes resting on me placidly. I walked up slowly.

“Good-evening—” solemnly.

“Good-evening—” seriously.

I was choosing amongst a half-dozen choice sentences I had framed as an introduction to my parting speech, when she said quietly, looking up: “I thought you might not come back this evening.”

“I have come to say good-by.”

“Are you going away?” Her voice expressed surprise—nothing more.

“Yes.” Solemnly.

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"For how long?"—without looking up.

"Perhaps, forever." Tragically.

"You are better at making a fire than I had supposed. Will you give me Dix?" This with the flash of a dimple.

"I—I—yes—if you want him."

I glanced at her face just in time to see the dimples disappear. "I am thinking of being married next week." My heart stopped beating.

"You were—what?"

"But of course if you are going away I could not do it, could I?" Her eyes sought mine, then fell.

"Eleanor!" I tried to possess myself of her hand; but she put it behind her. I tried to secure the other; but that also disappeared. Then I took—herself. "Eleanor!" Her face next second had grown grave. She looked up suddenly and looked me full in the eyes.

"You are a goose. What would you think if I were to say I would marry you right away?" She looked down again quickly, and her face was sweet with tenderness.

I was conscious of a sudden drawing in of my breath, and a feeling as if I were rising into the sky, "rimmed by the azure world." Then my brain began to act, and I seemed to have been

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lifted above the darkness. I was up in the sunlight again.

"I should think I was in Heaven," I said quietly, almost reverently. "But for God's sake, don't say that to me unless you mean it."

"Well, I will. I have written my father. Write to Mr. Marvel and ask him to come here."

I have never known yet whether this last was a piece of humor. I only know I telegraphed John Marvel, and though I rode all night to do so, I thought it was broad daylight.

In the ripe autumn John Marvel, standing before us in his white surplice in the little chapel among the oaks and elms which had been his first church, performed the ceremony that gave me the first prize I had really striven for—the greatest any man on earth could have won.

Still, as often as I spoke of my future plans, there was some secret between them: a shadowy suggestion of some mystery in which they both participated. And, but that I knew John Marvel too well, I might have been impatient. But I knew him now for the first time as she had known him long.

On our arrival in the city, after I had given the driver an order where to go, she gave another, and when the carriage drew up, it was not at

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my hotel, but at the door of the sunny house on the corner where I had first seen Eleanor Leigh come tripping down the steps with her parcels for the poor little crippled child and her violets for the Miss Tippses. Springing out before me, with her face radiant with joy and mystery, she tripped up the steps now just as the door was flung open by a butler who wore a comical expression of mingled pleasure and solemnity, for the butler was Jeams, and then having introduced him to me, she suddenly took the key from the lock, and handing it to me with a bow and a low laugh of delight:

“I make you, sir, livery of seisin.”

This, then, was the mystery.

She still lived in the house on the corner; through the aid offered by my namesake and kinsman her father had been enabled to retain it, and had given it to her as a wedding present.

So after long striving by ways that I knew not, and by paths that I had not tried, my fancy was realized.

I now dwell in the house on the corner that I picked so long ago for its sunshine.

It is even sunnier than I thought it. For I have found that sunlight and sweetness are not from without, but from within, and in that home

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is the radiance I caught that happy morning when I first saw Eleanor Leigh come tripping down the steps, like April, shedding sunshine and violets in her path.

XL

THE CURTAIN

IN closing a novel, the old novelists used to tell their readers, who had followed them long enough to become their friends, what in the sequel became of all the principal characters; and this custom I feel inclined to follow, because it appears to me to show that the story is in some sort the reflection of life as it is, and not as novelist or reader would make it. Fate may follow all men, but not in the form in which every reader would have it fall.

It might have satisfied one's ideas of justice if I could have told how Collis McSheen reaped in prison the reward of his long hidden crimes, and the adventurer, Pushkin, unmasked and degraded, was driven out from among the wealthy, whom he so sedulously cultivated; but this would not have been true to the facts. Collis McSheen moved into the great house which he had bought with his ill-gained wealth to gratify his daughter's ambition, and lived for many years, to outward

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seeming, a more or less respectable man; gave reasonably where he thought it would pay, from the money of which he had robbed others, and doubtless endeavored to forget his past, as he endeavored to make others forget it; but that past was linked to him by bands which no effort could ever break. And though he secured the adulation of those whom he could buy with his gaudy entertainments, he could never secure the recognition of any worthy man.

In his desperate hope to become respectable he broke with many of his old friends and with all whom he could escape from, but he could not escape from one, however he strove to break with him: himself. Chained to him by a bond he could not break was the putrescent body of his reeking past. It is the curse of men like him that those he longs to make his friends are the element who will have none of him. Thus, like Sisyphus, he ever strives to roll the stone to the hill-top, and, like Tantalus, he ever strives to reach the water flowing below his lips. Though he had escaped the legal punishment of his crimes, his punishment was that he lived in constant dread of the detection which appeared ever to dog his footsteps. The last measure in the bitter cup which he had filled with his own hand came

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from his daughter, who now called herself Countess Pushkin. Finding that, notwithstanding her so-called title and large establishment, she was excluded from that set to which she had been tolerantly admitted while she had youth and gayety and the spirits of a schoolgirl, not to mention the blindness of that age to things which experience sees clearly enough, she conceived the idea that it was her father's presence in her home which closed to her the doors of those houses where she aspired to be intimate. The idea, though it had long had a lodgment in her mind, had been fostered by Pushkin. Having to make her choice between her father and her social aspirations, she decided promptly. The scene which occurred was one which neither Collis McSheen nor his daughter could ever forget. In the sequel McSheen moved out and took quarters in a hotel, where he gradually sank into the hopelessness of a lonely misanthrope, shorn of his power, feared only by those he despised, detested by those he admired, and haunted by the fear of those he hated.

Pushkin remained in some sort in possession of the field, but though McSheen's daughter had been able to banish her father from his own home, she could not escape from her husband, whose

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vices, if apparently less criminal than McSheen's, were not less black. His capacity for spending money was something she had never dreamed of, and, like the horse-leech's daughter, he continually called for more, until, after a furious scene, his wife awoke to her power, and already half-beggared, suddenly shut her purse as her heart had been long shut against him, and bade him go. From this time her power over him was greater than it had ever been before; but unless rumor belied them desperately, they lived a life of cat and dog with all that it implied, until finally Pushkin was driven out, and after hanging about for a few years, died, as I learned, while his wife was off in Europe.

Peck continued, to outward appearance, a prosperous lawyer. His inveterate economy enabled him to preserve the appearance of prosperity; but no lawyer of standing ever spoke of him without a shrug of the shoulder or a lift of the eyebrow. Rumor dealt somewhat freely with his domestic affairs, but I never knew the facts, and rumor is often as great a liar almost as—I had nearly said as Peck, but that would be impossible. My last personal experience of him was in the case of Mr. Leigh's suit to keep control of his railway. In the final suit involving

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the straightening out of all matters connected with the attempt of the Canters and their set to get control of this property, I was retained as junior counsel along with my kinsman, Mr. Glave, and other counsel, representing Mr. Leigh's and his associates' interest. Peck appeared in the case as one of the representatives of a small alleged interest held by his father-in-law, Mr. Poole, which, as turned out on the final decision of the cause, had no value whatever. This having been decided, Peck, who was not without energy, at least where money was concerned, brought forward a claim for compensation to be allowed him out of the fund, and when this also was decided against him, he sought and secured a conference with our counsel, at which I was present. The contention which he set forth was based upon an equitable claim, as he termed it, to compensation for expenses and professional services expended under color of title, and if the facts he stated had been so, he might have been entitled equitably to some allowance. I had satisfied myself that his claims were without a shadow of foundation, yet he had the nerve, when he concluded his argument, or rather his personal appeal to our counsel, to turn to me for corroboration of his statement.

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"I admit, gentlemen," he said, "that these facts rest largely on my personal assurances, and, unfortunately, I am not known personally to most of you, though I trust that my professional standing where I am known may be accepted as a guaranty of my statements; but happily, there is one of you to whom I can refer with confidence, my old college mate and valued friend, Henry Glave. I might almost term him my former partner, so closely were we associated in the days when we were both struggling young attorneys, living in adjoining offices—I might, indeed, almost say the same office. He, I feel quite sure, will corroborate every statement I have made, at least so far as he knows the facts, and even where they rest wholly on my declaration, I feel sure of his indorsement, for he knows that I would cut off my right hand and have my tongue torn from its roots, before I would utter an untruth in any matter whatsoever; and least of all, where so paltry a thing as money is concerned. I appeal to Henry Glave."

He sat down with his eyes fixed blandly on me. I was so taken aback that I scarcely knew what to say. The smoothness of his words and the confidence of his manner had evidently made an impression on the others. They had, indeed,

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almost influenced me, but suddenly a whole train of reflection swept through my mind. Peck's duplicity from his earliest appearance in Wolfert's room at college down to the present, with my two old clients, the Miss Tipples, at the end, deceived and robbed by Collis McSheen, with Peck, as the facile instrument, worming himself into their confidence for what he called so paltry a thing as money, all came clearly to my mind. I stood up slowly, for I was thinking hard; but my duty appeared clear.

I regretted, I said, that Mr. Peck had appealed to me and to my long acquaintance with him, for it made my position a painful one; but as he had cited me as a witness, I felt that my duty was plain, and this was to state the facts. In my judgment, Mr. Peck was not entitled to any compensation whatever, as the evidence, so far as it existed outside of Mr. Peck's statements, was contrary to his contention, and so far as it rested on his personal testimony, I considered it as nothing, for I would not believe one word he said where his personal interest was concerned.

"And now," I added, "if Mr. Peck wishes me to give the grounds on which this opinion of mine is based, either orally or in writing, I will do so."

I paused, with my gaze fastened on him, and,

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with a sudden settling in their seats, the other counsel also turned their eyes on him. His face had suddenly blanched, but beyond this his expression did not change. He sat for a few seconds rather limply, and then slowly rose.

"I am astonished," he began slowly, and his voice faltered. "I am surprised, gentlemen, that Mr. Glave should think such things of me." He took out his watch, fumblingly, and glanced at it. It was the same watch he had got of me. "I see I must ask you to excuse me. I must catch my train," he stammered. "Good-morning," and he put on his hat and slunk out of the door.

As the door closed every one drew a long breath and settled in his seat, and nearly every one said, "Well!"

My kinsman, whose eyes had been resting on me with a somewhat unwonted twinkle in them, reached across the board and extended his large hand.

"Well, young man, you and I had a misunderstanding a few years ago, but I hope you bear me no grudge for it now. I should like to be friends with you. If you had needed it, you would have squared all accounts to-day. I know that man. He is the greatest liar on earth. He has lost the power to tell the truth."

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It may well be believed that I had gripped his hand when he first held it out, and the grip was one of a friendship that has lasted.

I had expected to hear from Peck, but no word came from him, and the last I ever heard of him was that he and McSheen had had a quarrel, in which McSheen had kicked him out of his office. A suit appeared on the docket against McSheen, in which Peck was the plaintiff, but no declaration was ever filed, and the case was finally dropped from the docket.

Jeams failed to hold long the position of butler in our modest household, for though my wife put up—on my account, as I believe—with Jeams's occasionally marked unsteadiness of gait or mushiness of utterance, she finally broke with him on discovering that Dix showed unmistakable signs of a recent conflict, in which the fact that he had been worsted had possibly something to do with Jeams's discharge, for Dix was the idol of her heart, and it came to her ears that Jeams had taken Dix out one night and matched him against the champion of the town. But though Jeams lost the post of butler, he simply reverted to his old position of factotum and general utility man about my premises. His marriage to a very decent woman, though, according to rumor, with

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a termagant's tongue, helped to keep him reasonably straight, though not uniformly so; for one afternoon my wife and I came across him when he showed that degree of delightful pomposity which was the unmistakable sign of his being "half-shot."

"Jeams," I said, when I had cut short his grandiloquence, "what will Eliza say to you when she finds you this way again?"

Jeams straightened himself and assumed his most dignified air. "My wife, sir, knows better than to take me to task. She recognizes me, sir, as a gentleman."

"She does? You wait and see when you get home."

Jeams's manner suddenly changed. He sank back into his half-drivelling self. "Oh, she ain't gwine to say nothin' to me, Marse Hen. She ain't gwine to say no more than Miss Nelly there says to you when you gets this way. What does she say to you?"

"She doesn't say anything to me. She has no occasion to do so."

Jeams twisted his head to one side and burst into a drunken laugh. "Oh! Yes, she do. I've done heard her. Eliza, she regalates me, and Miss Nelly, she regalates you, an' I reckon we both knows it, and we better know it, too."

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And this was the fact. As usual, Jeams had struck the mark.

As for John Marvel, he remained the same old John—plodding, quiet, persistent, patient, zealous, cheery, and self-sacrificing, working among the poor with an unfaltering trust in human nature which no shocks could shake, because deep down in the untroubled depths of his soul lay an unfaltering trust in the divine goodness and wisdom of God. He had been called to a larger and quite important church, but after a few days of consideration he, against the earnest wishes and advice of his friends, myself among them, declined the call. He assigned among other reasons the fact that he was expected to work to pay off the debt for which the church was somewhat noted, and he knew nothing about business, his duty was to preach the gospel; but when friends made it plain that the debt would be taken care of if he became the rector, he still shook his head. His work was among the poor and he could not leave them.

My wife and I went out to his church the Sunday evening following his decision, and as we strolled along through the well-known squalid streets, I could not help expressing my disappointment that after all our work he should have rejected the offer.

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"He is really the most unpractical man on earth," I fumed. "Here we have gotten him a good call to a church that many a man would jump at, and when he finds a difficulty in the way, we work until we have removed it and yet he rejects it. He will remain an assistant to the end of his days." My wife made no reply, a sure sign that she did not agree with me, but did not care to discuss the matter. It is her most effective method of refuting me.

When we arrived we found the little church packed to suffocation and men on the outside leaning in at the windows. Among them I recognized the tall form of my old drummer. As we joined the group, John Marvel's voice, clear and strong, came floating out through the open windows.

He was giving out a hymn.

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er:
I am nearer home to-day
Than I ever have been before."

The whole congregation joined in, those without the church as well as those who were within.

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As I heard the deep bass of the old drummer, rolling in a low, solemn undertone, a sudden shifting of the scene came to me. I was in a great auditorium filled with light, and packed with humanity rising tier on tier and stretching far back till lost in the maze of distances. A grand orchestra, banked before me, with swaying arms and earnest faces, played a wonderful harmony, which rolled about me like the sea and whelmed me with its volume till I was almost swept away by the tide, then suddenly down under its sweep I found the low, deep roll of the bass drum. No one appeared to mark it or paid any heed to him. Nor did the big drummer pay any heed to the audience. All he minded was the harmony and his drum. But I knew that, unmarked and unheeded, it set athrob the pulsing air and stirred the billows through which all that divine music reached and held the soul.

As we walked home that night after pressing our way into the throng of poor people to wring John Marvel's hand, I said to my wife, after a struggle with myself to say it:

"I think I was wrong about John, and you were right. He did right. He is well named the Assistant."

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My wife said simply: "I feel that I owe him more than I can say." She slipped her hand in my arm, and a warm feeling for all mankind surged about my heart.

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